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THE ECONOMIC FRONT

SIR JOHN SIMON'S speech on war finance amounted to an unspoken admission that the British form of capitalism is exceedingly ill-adapted to the waging of totalitarian war. Innumerable "controls" of every sort and kind have been superimposed upon it without any change in its essential character. The result, pointed out in a remarkable article in the *Times*, is to make the worst of both worlds. Instead of a unified mobilisation of economic resources under the hand of the State, we have a host of unco-ordinated "controls," telling those in charge of industry what not to do, and, except over a very limited field, no one telling them what to do in any positive sense. Hence the persistence of unemployment at a high level into the fourth month of war (for the recently announced decrease of 28,000, though welcome, is but a drop in the ocean). This persistence is largely a consequence of the stagnation of our export trade, about which no one in authority seems to be seriously troubling his head. The legions of "controllers," intent on safeguarding military and home civilian supplies, hamstring the exporter by refusing permits or keeping him waiting until orders have gone elsewhere. Scattered all over the country, and subject to no unified ministerial control, the "controllers" are the very last people to see the situation as a whole, or to devise a unifying policy for dealing with it. As the *Times* pointed out, one of the most powerful economic weapons at our disposal is the pre-emption of neutral supplies, in order to prevent them from reaching Germany. This requires exports—when necessary subsidised exports—to pay for them; it also requires a planning body concerned not merely with "economic warfare" in a narrow sense, but still more with positive economic mobilisation.

Paying for the War

Our failure to envisage the requirements of totalitarian war can be seen no less clearly from another aspect. Sir John Simon's speech on war finance read very much like an attempt to scarify the great British middle class; it may also encourage the view that peace must be patched up at the first opportunity. The Chancellor has, as he says, gone some way towards soaking the very rich, about whose sacrifices he waxed eloquent; and he is now, from the tone of his speech, getting ready to demand extensive sacrifices from the poor, at any rate in the shape of a fall in real wages as prices are allowed to rise without

equivalent wage advances. Certain sections of the very poor—those under the U.A.B., who are now to receive increases on a modest scale, and the old-age pensioners, who have been promised an early announcement of some concession—will have the wind tempered to them, as it must be if they are not to sink into sheer destitution. Public opinion will also enforce concessions to the dependants of men serving with the forces; some groups which occupy strategic economic positions will doubtless make use of these advantages. Broadly, this leaves open to the soaking process of which Sir John Simon spoke only two large groups of persons—the main body of wage-earners, and the considerable class intermediate between the wage-earners and the really rich. The latter of these groups, which is collectively responsible for a high proportion of total expenditure on those luxuries on which the Government tells us to retrench, has so far been let off lightly under emergency taxation. It will be hit by rising prices; but many members of it have much more margin for meeting high prices than the vast majority of the wage-earners, who stand to be much harder hit.

The Chancellor's Dilemma

If the war goes on somebody must be hit, either by taxation or by rising prices due to inflationary finance. The severity of the blow can be reduced by taking really effective steps to mobilise all our available resources of production. But there must be a blow, even if we do really mobilise—which we are not doing at present. It would be monstrously short-sighted policy to allow this blow to fall upon the social services; their maintenance is indispensable for the rebuilding of a decent Britain after the war. Upon whom, then, is it to fall? The Government doubtless wishes it to fall mainly on the wage-earners; otherwise it cannot but fall mainly on the middle groups which are the Government's chief supporters and the principal bulwark against Socialism in this country. Accordingly, these groups are now being let down comparatively lightly. With the "standard rate" of income tax at 7*s.* 6*d.*, a married man with one child and £300 a year still pays under 2 per cent. of his income, one with £500 under 9 per cent., and one with £1,000 about 20 per cent. Here, obviously, are large reserves of "taxable capacity." But can Sir John Simon tax them without antagonising his own political supporters, by inflicting real hardships of readjustment of living standards on persons who have the same-sized incomes but larger families to support? Can he tax them without ruining the Building Societies, the better-class shops, the entertainment and hotel industries, or without destroying the existing class-structure of Great Britain and creating that formidable precursor of mass-Fascism—a ruined middle class. He cannot; and therefore they will not be taxed until every other expedient has been exhausted.

The Secret Session

The scheme put forward a few weeks ago by Mr. Keynes was deliberately devised to find a way out of this dilemma. It is a dilemma indeed; assuredly the wage-earners will not agree to pay for the war while the middle classes get off so lightly. Many have criticised Mr. Keynes, but no one has yet produced an alternative. As the Chancellor pointed out, the Government is spending already at the rate of £2,400,000,000 a year, and fully developed warfare, if it comes, will be more costly still. We cannot do this, with no America ready to lend us the money, without Draconian economies. Mr. Keynes wishes to temper their security by a system of post-dated State I.O.U.'s, which will make us all little *rentiers* and, he hopes, reconcile us to present afflictions. We shall not be reconciled to any scheme—for all are bound to be unpleasant—as long as we can see everywhere unemployed workers, unused resources, and a system of State controls which seems designed rather to entrench capitalist monopolies than to organise a concerted national effort to increase production all round—for export and exchange, as well as for the supply of military needs. These are the issues that, we hope, will be freely and fully discussed by Parliament at the forthcoming secret session; for it is already evident that what is needed is no mere tinkering with the faults of our present economic organisation here and there, but a complete change-over to a co-ordinated economic control aiming at immediate and positive measures designed to bring into full use every economic resource that we are able to command.

The Attack on Finland

Unfavourable weather may partly account for the slow pace of Russia's operations against Finland in the first week of the war. The attempt to take Hangö by landing troops upon it has not been pressed, and a cruiser that took part in this attack was disabled and towed back to its base in Esthonia. The bombardment of Helsinki from the air was suspended after two days to permit the safe evacuation of its German residents. Finnish reports, corroborated by English correspondents, describe the ruthless machine-gunning of civilian refugees from the air. In the Karelian isthmus the Russian advance, which encountered traps and ambushes in great variety, required five days to cover twenty miles, but if we may trust the news from Moscow it has now broken the fortified Mannerheim line. Reports are silent about the progress of the march across the narrow "waist" of Central Finland. Round the port of Petsamo and the nickel mines, where the defenders seem to be in surprisingly large numbers, operations, conducted in the Arctic darkness, are indecisive.

The Political Consequences

Russia's chief political move has been to conclude a "treaty" with the puppet government of Finland, which promises it what was never offered to the legitimate government, considerable monetary compensation as well as a big but empty stretch of Karelian territory, in return for the surrender of strategical positions and the conclusion of an "alliance." The League of Nations, when it meets on Saturday, will have to consider a proposal by Argentina for the expulsion of Russia. Russia will not be present, for as M. Molotov's Note puts it, she regards the calling of the Council as "irreconcilable with respect for the Soviet Government." For Sweden the invasion of her neighbour makes an anxious problem. She has partially mobilised, and has laid a minefield that may be intended to protect the Aaland Isles. It is probable that the Ministry will be broadened to include the Conservatives and that Mr. Sandler may leave the Foreign Office. A further cause for anxiety springs from a suspicion

that Germany may be thinking of imposing some species of protectorate or non-aggression pact on Sweden. In the United States President Roosevelt is promoting a "moral" but as yet unofficial embargo on exports to Russia, which will hold up the delivery of a large number of war-planes. He is also expected to propose that the sums Finland has paid as interest on her war-debt be devoted to some purpose beneficial to her.

The War in the Air

Mr. Churchill in his confident review of the Navy's work claimed the destruction last week of five U-boats. The steady decline in the number of British ships sunk is proof of the efficacy of the convoy system. But the increase of neutral vessels sunk greatly lessens satisfaction. One distinguished exploit stands out from the chronicle of the week's routine. A squadron of British bombers surprised Heligoland on Sunday, bombed the warships lying at anchor, scored one direct and several near hits, brought down a German fighter and returned to its base without a casualty or the loss of a plane. In the South Atlantic, meanwhile, the pocket-battleship, *Admiral Scheer*, has sunk the 10,000 ton liner *Doric Star*. This is her third victim, a meagre "bag" after three months' prowling. The East Coast is still subject to frequent visits from isolated German aircraft. Some, like the plane that crashed in Norfolk, are laying mines, but what is the purpose of the others?

Lord Nuffield's Fifteenth Million

Lord Nuffield this week brought up the total of his published benefactions to £15 millions by presenting one million ordinary shares in Morris Motors to form the nucleus of a fund for regional hospital organisation. No one will deny the urgent need for an effective regional plan of hospital organisation, so as to provide a wide range of specialist services in addition to general hospital accommodation. Those who hold strongly that the hospital services ought to be brought completely under public ownership and that reorganisation ought therefore to proceed under public auspices will not, on that account, underestimate the value of Lord Nuffield's gift; there is, unhappily, little chance of any truly national scheme for the time being, and the nation will have to do what it can by patching up the existing mosaic of private hospitals, institutions taken over from the poor law authorities by the local councils, and specialist hospitals provided under various auspices for tuberculosis and other particular diseases. The function of Lord Nuffield's fund, which is being placed in the hands of trustees, will be to make grants to Regional Boards and thus to encourage the various hospital authorities to work together on regional lines. This is a poor substitute for a real national service; but, as the experience of London and other centres already working under regional schemes shows, it is a great advance on the chaotic conditions of some other areas.

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THE MAN OF STEEL

At the beginning of the French Revolution Edmund Burke prophesied its development into a military dictatorship. The same prophesy has been consistently made ever since the Bolshevik victory in 1917. That prophesy has been fulfilled to-day, though not in the form in which the prophets imagined. Stalin's advance into Finland has taken us all by surprise, not because we were under any illusions, since the great purges of recent years, that he cared for the rights of man or the precepts of Lenin, but because we believed that he had accepted the existing frontiers of the Soviet Union and was too wise to take a step which would discredit the U.S.S.R. with its sympathisers and strengthen its enemies all over the world. His occupation of the Russian part of Poland when Germany had taken the rest, was readily explicable; his operations against the three Baltic States were realistic measures of defence, accomplished without war and justifiable on the usual imperialist argument that a Great Power must hold the strategic keys to its own territory. If Stalin had been content to keep strategic points in the Baltic and to bargain with the Finns until he had secured greater security for Leningrad, that too could have been defended on strategic grounds. But by adopting the familiar technique of the Führer, bombing Helsinfors and bringing his vast army into play against this small country, when it was clear that he could have got by negotiation all that the most timorous Russian could have asked for in the way of security, he compels us to rank his dictatorship with that of the other totalitarian regimes. By refusing the plea of the Finnish Government for further negotiations, by rejecting the offers of mediation first of America and then of Sweden, by disputing the right of the League to concern itself with his doings, and by scrapping the treaty of non-aggression with Finland, he has shown that, like Hitler, he has a contempt for all arguments except that of superior force. Like Hitler, he would argue that in the world today only force counts and he can cite the past wrongs of the U.S.S.R. which he is now avenging. The Western Powers say little of the horrors of the White Terror in Finland in 1918.

The Russian Revolution has followed precedent only too faithfully. It began by making a cult of the unflinching use of force, but the ends which it then served were the liberation of the masses the world over. To the cult of force it is still loyal, but the ends it seeks seem increasingly those of Russian aggrandisement. This degeneration reflects, faithfully enough, the personality that always was Stalin's. It is difficult to believe that the idealism of the revolution in its early, heroic phases can even have meant anything to him. What is tragic is that by the suppression of all free discussion and criticism and by the denial of the processes of justice he has degraded the mind of the nation that the Bolsheviks began to educate. One is tempted to sum up this achievement in the jargon of Stalin's sect. By the inexorable laws of its dialectic, Bolshevism brought into being its antithesis, National Socialism. Today the question being asked is whether the ugly thing that now reigns from Vladivostok to Cologne is turning into the inevitable synthesis, National-Bolshevism.

The motive and explanation of Stalin's performance is evident to the whole world. No one, not even the drilled

masses in Moscow, can believe that the master of 180 million Russians feared the aggressive ambitions of less than four million Finns. What he first fears is that his exemplar in Berlin may turn eastwards, if he survives this war. If he does not survive it, fear can always provide a variation on its original theme. The soldier or the Emperor who may succeed Hitler, be he a Göring or a Hohenzollern, will cherish the same ambition and may be encouraged by the capitalist Powers to fulfil it. In that event two routes might tempt the invader. He might break through Poland into the fertile plains of the Ukraine. But Leningrad, Peter the Great's "window," would be an even more tempting door. It was never an easy place to defend and it is now the centre of a busy industrial region. The Germans might have attacked it by air and sea, as well as by land. Stalin had this always in mind during the Anglo-Soviet discussions. He demanded a free hand to deal with "indirect aggression" in the Baltic States. What he dreaded was a German penetration of these weak and unstable republics with a view to a future invasion. That is what Lord Halifax meant to convey by his discreet disclosures to the House of Lords. Lord Halifax did not explain why Britain refused Russia's offer after the seizure of Prague or why, when negotiations were started, so much was done by Britain to confirm Stalin's suspicions of our sincerity. But he made it clear that Stalin in these talks asked the Western Powers to support his coming demand for the Latvian islands of Oesel and Dagö, and to back him in his claims upon the Finns. The Western Powers were too confident or too scrupulous to endorse these terms and therefore Stalin struck his bargain with von Ribbentrop and precipitated the war he had seemed so eager to prevent. The German soldiers, who never shared Hitler's ambition to colonise Russia, may have viewed with calm the closing of their road to Leningrad: they were delivered from their nightmare of a war on two fronts, and they may have reckoned on more generous help in the shape of oil, minerals, foods and fibres than the Russians have yet given them.

Stalin is now doing what Hitler permitted him to do, and he is doing it with a characteristic excess of zeal. He could easily have won control of the Baltic, with a more modest provision of ports, islands and aerodromes than he has actually taken or demanded. His attempt to impose a puppet government upon a united and democratic nation is an act that cannot be justified as a military precaution. Nor can the fear of a future German attack explain his demand for the Arctic territory round Petsamo. There he may have two objects in view. This barren region contains one of the richest of the world's few nickel mines. It is also a corridor that leads through Norway to the vital Atlantic port of Narvik. Stalin cannot justify all he is doing by an excessive concern for the safety of his existing empire. We must rather think of him as reinstating the Tsarist Empire; there are signs that he means next to turn to the reoccupation of Bessarabia.

The consequences of this adventure may not answer all Stalin's expectations. Experience may not justify the more extravagant estimates of the Red Army's quality. The Swedes are roused, and the Aaland Isles may not come into Russia's hands without a struggle. The Baltic is not yet a Russian lake. But it is on the moral plane that Stalin has revealed the limitations of his intelligence. The sympathy of all that is progressive in two hemispheres was one of the main defences of the Soviet Union. If he sapped this defence by his purge, he has now almost destroyed it. While he lives and reigns, few of us will orient our praying-carpets towards Moscow. We shall do well, however, to bridle indignation. It would quickly place us in unwelcome company. Not the most vociferous friends of Finland can hope to compete in their moral wrath with the Duce. What the Albanians and Abyssinians felt is not recorded. In America, as in Europe, the press of the more reactionary section of the owning class leads the chorus of calculating anger. It will fall on the more active section of the working class in France and the United States long before it can reach the Kremlin. The purpose of this simulated rage is to weaken resistance to Hitler and make easier that destruction and partition of the Western Empires to which all the Fascist States look forward.

Let us note well the comment of the Rotterdam correspondent of the *Times* that the Nazis cherish no dearer dream "as a possible means of getting them out of the mess into which Hitler and Von Ribbentrop have landed them than that of a war between Great Britain and Russia." Actually, the most probable result of talk about Russia as the real enemy will be to cement the now ambiguous alliance of the two Dictators, and to induce Stalin to postpone the alarming prospect of an "anti-Bolshevik crusade" war by prolonging the present war to the best of his ability. He will see to it that the Germans do not lack food or oil; he will build for them bombers, tanks and submarines; he may even join them as an active belligerent. On grounds of prudence alone, those who wish to turn this war into a crusade against Bolshevism are our worst enemies.

But there is another reason for caution. While condemning the attack on Finland, we should not forget that the achievements of the Russian Revolution are not transitory. That workers shall not be exploited; that education shall be the key to freedom and power for all; that the great resources of the modern world shall be planned under public authority for a happier future—these and other basic conceptions took root and blossomed in the U.S.S.R. and the strength of their hold in the minds of men and women everywhere is due in large measure to the Bolsheviks. These achievements and ideals are not transitory.

GERMAN AND ENGLISH PROPAGANDA

As my train was slowly moving into the station at Hanover, the German standing beside me said: "You'd hardly notice the war here in Germany; there's scarcely any sign of it. But you will find that the German people stand behind the Führer as one man. How foolish it is of the English to think that by their stupid leaflets they can separate the German people from their Führer!" "Has there been a wide distribution of those leaflets?" I asked innocently. "Very wide," he said. "All over this part of Germany. I know because it is my business to deal with them." He then added that some of them were naïve and badly done in his opinion. Later I was disappointed to find that no one I met in Berlin had come across any leaflets. Still I am convinced that this method of getting information over to the German people is well worth while. Why else should the Germans be dropping propaganda over the Allied troops in France?

I have seen one excellent English leaflet entitled "Der Führer spricht," which shows how Hitler contradicted himself in regard to the Czechs and the Poles. The very fact that these documents are forbidden, enhances the appetite for them, and the same is true of the English radio broadcasts. I have been asked many times since my return from Germany whether those broadcasts were effective, and whether they were being heard by many people. It is, of course, impossible to form any estimate of the number of people who venture to "listen in" to London. But Americans who have important connections told me in Berlin and other cities that they felt sure that the number was increasing, however great the risk. It is the old story of forbidden fruit. But more than that is the fact that the German newspapers are no longer newspapers, but merely the organs of Dr. Goebbels' vile propaganda. News of the world, outside of war news, is practically no longer obtainable unless people can get their hands on foreign newspapers, and that is more difficult since the coming of the war.

With any other than the German mentality, the Goebbels type of propaganda would react unfavourably upon its creators. With some Germans it undoubtedly does. Working men told me that they did not believe anything in the papers they were forced to subscribe to, but with the middle class that is not versed in foreign affairs, and has not travelled much abroad, there is no doubt that the German propaganda is telling. It is hard to resist such an outpouring of abuse and denunciation, when you hear it all day long over the wireless and in the press. I have noticed this with the anti-Jewish propaganda. For example, one woman who, at the outset of the Hitler regime, wrote me that she wished to stand on the street-corners and denounce what was going on, and would do so were she not old in years and if she did not know in advance that it would be ineffective, now accuses me of having a "pro-Jewish complex," and asked me not to see too much of them lest I take on some of their attributes!

So far as German propaganda in the neutral States is concerned, I am sure that it is in the main ineffective, and that it is more than offset by the fear of themselves which the Nazis have engendered. The Dutch papers, for example, are outspokenly against the Germans, even though they have doubtless been asked by their government to avoid giving offence to Germany. It would pay the English well to cultivate the press of these adjacent States, and to utilise their advertising columns for the publication in German of matters of special importance. The use of the advertising columns for political propaganda purposes is frequent in the United States and on the Continent, but seems to be little resorted-to here outside election times. In spite of the difficulties the press of the neutral States adjacent to Germany does get over the boundaries, and would doubtless be resorted to more frequently if dissenting Germans knew that there were regular factual British and French statements to be found in these dailies. Undoubtedly this would cost quite a sum, but from what I hear very large amounts have been spent on far less valuable propaganda.

Particularly is it advisable that this should be done with the Allied peace aims. Their statement and re-statement would have the most beneficial effect upon public opinion in the neutral countries as well as in Germany, where their wide distribution is of the utmost importance, for I can think of no more effective way to undermine the anti-British propaganda than to convince the German people that England is not hostile to them, and has no intention of subordinating them to the British Empire.

In view of the great and growing unrest and unhappiness in the Low Countries and in Scandinavia, because of the British blockade, if I were the head of the British Ministry of Propaganda I should take a great deal of advertising space in the newspapers of those countries to set forth quietly and factually the reasons for the blockade and the necessity of it, and do it without bitter recrimination, or name-calling. That would make friends—if it were properly done—where the Allies need friends; there can be no doubt that the plight of these little neutral countries is getting progressively worse, and will continue to do so. They might just as well be in the war, except that there is no fighting on their soil. They deserve every attention, if only because of the increasing pressure on them by the Germans and Hitler's threats that if they do not actively resent the British blockade measures they will be deemed to be un-neutral and therefore open to attack. It is all very well for Englishmen to say individually that they are sorry that the fate of the neutral States is that of the innocent bystander, but the British Government would be very well-advised if it went out of its way to express sympathy, to show a recognition of the hardships being inflicted upon the neutrals, and to explain the necessity *now* of the blockade. If the war goes on a long time the suffering and the exasperation of these countries that are being ground between the upper millstone of England and the nether one of Germany are certain to become dangerous.

As for the English wireless propaganda to Germany, while it has shown some improvement recently, it still has too much of a routine form to have much real appeal to those for whom it is doubtless intended. Terms and expressions are used which are absolutely out of date in Germany, as when the "Nazi-Bonzen" are referred to; frequently the language is too academic and sounds too much like translation. I suggest that in the German broadcasts the B.B.C. should consider interpolating from time to time some German poem or song that is universally known to Germans; that they should take more advantage of the presence here of distinguished Aryan Germans whose names are well known in Germany, and Englishmen of prominence who know Germany and can speak good German, to give information as to conditions here, and also to preach sound democratic doctrine. A little more emotion, and a little less routinised speaking would, I am told, be more helpful. It should also be borne in mind that an appeal which might be effective to the workers of Hamburg should be entirely different for Prussia or Bavaria.

As for the English attitude toward America, while I have been on this side of the Atlantic since the beginning of the war, I am assured that both the Ministry of Information and the Propaganda Department are avoiding the mistakes of the last war, and that they are not responsible for the many lecturers in the United States at present, whose presence has called forth considerable press criticism. Here the correct policy is to let the facts speak for themselves, and to tell the exact truth, even if the events are unfavourable. The day that either the British or the American public feel that the Chamberlain Government has not been absolutely frank with them will be the blackest one of the war for England. The American public has not forgotten the false and misleading propaganda which was deliberately sent to the United States from Crewe House and other sources during the last war, for that has been set forth at length in a number of books. The slightest breath of suspicion that anything of the kind is happening now would chill the overwhelming American adherence to the Allied cause.

When I was in Berlin an official of the Foreign Office, nettled by my criticisms of Germany, said: "You have a very poor opinion of the German people." My answer was: "I have a far higher opinion of the German people than your Government has." "How so?" "Because I think so well of the German people that I am willing to believe that they can be trusted with the truth, and your Government does not." When he challenged me to prove my statement I reminded him of some of the lies about British naval losses, and to this he could make no rejoinder except to say that there was always lying on both sides in every war. Some lying is inevitable and, perhaps, necessary if one makes war. But in this struggle it will be an enormous moral advantage to the Allies if they differ from the German Government in fully trusting their peoples, upon whose courage and endurance depends the ultimate outcome of the war.

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

FRANCE AND THE WAR—II

THE state of mind of the French working class is not easy to fathom. The censored press says little about it, and the trade union papers, such as *Syndicats*, are reticent on a number of important points—such as the present membership of the C.G.T. But after talking to a good number of working people, I think I may describe the position briefly as follows. The Stalin-Hitler pact acted as a bombshell amongst the Paris working class, a very large part of which was Communist. The pact created incredible confusion among them. For years Thorez and the other Communists had been bellowing their heads off against Hitler and *les fâchistes*, and had been exalting all the old virtues of French patriotism and even jingoism. Remember the Communist posters in the 1936 election: Hitler with a bloodstained knife between his teeth; tricolor compositions of Rude's *Marseillaise;* editorials in the *Humanité* in honour of Joan of Arc and even Napoleon; Joan of Arc being a kind of forerunner of the Popular Front; remember also the violent anti-Munichism of the Communists, their violence of language about Mr. Chamberlain and about the betrayal of Czechoslovakia. And now—the wisdom of Stalin; not a word against Hitler and the bestial destruction of Poland; attacks on "British capitalism for which the people of France are shedding their blood"; clamours for peace—but no indication of what kind of peace. The French worker has a fund of patriotic common sense, an instinct of national self-preservation which made this sort of thing very unpalatable to him. And yet, Communist propaganda is not entirely ineffective, even though it is so obviously a blend of Nazi and Stalin propaganda, as is seen, for instance, from the German plane which the other day dropped Moscow-printed leaflets over some of the Paris suburbs. If there are still Communists in France it is for a number of reasons. The chief reason, perhaps, is psychological—the reluctance to admit that they have been deceived and have been deceiving themselves for years combined with a kind of instinctive protest against the police measures taken against Communist leaders, of "loyalty" amongst the rank and file; a generally oppositionist or rebellious or *anarchisant* frame of mind not altogether uncommon among the French working class—and encouraged by their grievances against the economic order. Originally, the "persecution" of the Communist leaders was a mistake in the opinion of some observers; but one cannot to-day blame the Government for repressing leaflet propaganda obviously carried out at the behest of Moscow and Berlin.

In spite of these oppositionist, *anarchisant* and pacifist ideas floating about among certain sections of the working class, it may be said that, in a general way, the Paris proletariat is getting on with its job, and working hard, and is regarding its work as part of the war and of national defence. What is happening in the C.G.T. is very important. The Communist federations—that is those who refused to repudiate Stalin—have been turned out. What they represent numerically is very hard to say; but it is significant, for instance, that the bulk of the Paris metal workers and transport workers (who were strongly Communist in the past) are not among the excluded federations. Nor, of course, are the miners, who were always syndicalist and strictly anti-Communist. The C.G.T., which suffered much damage from the abortive general strike last November which was engineered by the Communists, is delighted to be rid of them; for through "colonising" it, the Communists tried to turn it into a weapon of political action. Its present membership is certainly nothing like five million, which it was after the great wave of strikes in June, 1936; and it may be even less than the two millions to which it declined after the General Strike; but it is becoming a homogeneous organism, strictly syndicalist in character and not associated with any political party. While denouncing the Communists it is rather critical of Blum and his governmental record. It seems that Belin, Dumoulin and Jouhaux are tending towards a *modus vivendi* with the Government—a tendency towards co-operation of which, one may hope, the Government will take advantage. Blum considers that the restoration of the C.G.T. on a purely syndicalist basis is the greatest internal development in France since the war began.

What, in the meantime, is to happen to the enormous ex-Communist rank and file? The whole thing is in a state of flux; and it is a question not easy to answer at the present stage. Much, in fact everything, depends on how the war develops. Hundreds of thousands of Communists have, of course, been mobilised; and these are, in the main, anti-Stalin and certainly not pro-Stalin. The other day I ran into an old acquaintance—a junior member of the *Humanité* staff, and now a sergeant in the French Air Force, who was in Paris on leave for a couple of days. He was, he said, "getting on fine"; plenty of work, damn good food—though rather too much beef every day. "And what about *le petit père Stalin?*" "Oh, *le batiouchka, le rodnoi* Joseph Vissarionovitch" (like a lot of *Humanité* chaps, he had picked up a little Russian), "to hell with him," he laughed. "Don't talk about that. I am neutral for the duration. All I know is that what happened in Moscow in August seems damned fishy to me." It seems to be much the same with most of the ex-Communists in the Army. As for the ex-Communists in the factories, they don't know yet where they are. A high proportion must be completely "through" with Moscow. And what is to happen to them? Blum, hoping to build up a kind of French Labour Party embracing almost the entire French working class, is inviting them to join the Socialist Party; but one doubts whether they can ever be temperamentally in sympathy with the "Social Democrats"; for what attracted them to the Communists' fold was largely its *dynamisme*. It is too early to say what is to happen to the French ex-Communists. Some (it is suggested)—not many—may join the Socialists, some may go Trotskyite or *anarchisant;* some may go into some hyper-nationalist, Fascist party with great "dynamic" vigour (if and when it is born); some may, in spite of everything, remain Stalinite, in some cases in the vague expectation that Stalin may yet double-cross Hitler. Of course if he did that there might well be a new Stalinite vogue.

On the whole, France is united in its determination to pursue the war; yet the war is such a tragedy that some pacifism is bound to exist. Not only among the working class. You get it among certain politicians. Certain strange birds have been whispering in their ears that if only England and France make peace, Germany will attack Russia. Not many are duped by this kind of thing—for what is embarrassing Hitler most to-day is the fact that France had time, during the war in Poland, to mobilise completely and so ruin all chances of a Blitzkrieg—hence Hitler's longing for an armistice. Nevertheless, certain politicians are playing about with these insidious German suggestions.

The other day I was talking to an old friend who is now a high Government official. He was in one of his less official moods. "What we really lack," he said, "is a Clemenceau." "Oh," I said, "but isn't Daladier pretty good as a war Premier?" "Yes," he replied, "as a War Minister he is first-rate. As the man in whom people have confidence he is splendid. But there is a little too much of the 'good fellow' about him. He doesn't like to do nasty things. Yet, there's a bunch of blokes nosing about whom old Clemenceau would have put in jug by now. However," he added, "he may do it yet."

ALEXANDER WERTH

A LONDON DIARY

IT would be amusing to compile a pamphlet devoted to entries for a prize for the most surprising lie thought up by any national State in recent years. In 1931-2 Japan was easily first. In 1935, Italy was running a good second, until she was hopelessly outclassed by the Nazis. Against Dr. Goebbels, the astonishing lies of all the Governments on the Non-Intervention Committee seem somehow commonplace. Stalin

is now making the running for Hitler, but we are so used to this kind of thing to-day that we can no longer conjure up even a bleak smile when we are told that the Finns were about to attack the U.S.S.R. and that Britain was backing up their aggression. Behind this lie, there was only the fact that there is foreign capital in Finland and that capitalism might at some future date again use Finland as a basis for an attack on the U.S.S.R. There is a further point, hidden in the British press, that Finland has been, ever since 1919, a centre of intrigue against the U.S.S.R. and that the White Terror, which followed that short Red rule in Finland in 1918 was amongst the cruellest of a cruel breed. Now to the ludicrous accusation that Britain has persuaded the Finns to stand up for themselves, comes a mere comic report in the Italian *Popolo di Roma* that Britain wishes to extend the war against Germany and is therefore encouraging Stalin to attack the Finns! This may surprise some people here who have not realised that the Italian press is still strongly anti-British. It is also furiously anti-Soviet and persistently pro-Nazi. It therefore distinguishes between Hitler's and Stalin's aggression and, because it must be anti-British, asserts that Britain backs Moscow!

* * *

So obviously is Federal Union in some form the ideal form of peace that it catches on like wild-fire. The three young men who founded the society in this country are snowed under with work. I am not sure that the enthusiasts who support it really understand its implications better than some of their predecessors who supported the idea of the League and often remained complete pacifists at the same time. I gather that the rather naive ideas of Clarence Streit, who gave the movement its original impetus, are now at a discount. Federal Union was again sponsored in the remarkable letter which the Archbishop of York contributed this week to the *Daily Telegraph*. The letter pleaded for an attempt at peace-making before Armageddon was upon us; that was all right, but how did that square with Federal Union which could surely only follow the downfall of Hitler? And was not the Archbishop confused when he talked about restoring the free sovereignty of Poland when sovereignty is the very thing Federation aims at abolishing? I expect the Archbishop will explain before long in more detail what his plan is.

* * *

Apropos Federal Union, a correspondent reports the following from a recent open-air meeting in Bethnal Green. Sir Oswald Mosley, he tells me, said that Federal Union would mean "international government," and then, following Hitler's technique, put a rhetorical question to which there is a stock answer, "What will that be?"

"The Jews!" roared his followers.

"What is the international power?"

"The Jews!"

"You know, my friends."

"The Jews!"

"Yes! International Jewish Finance."

After applause, Mosley went on:

> That is the only great international force in the world to-day. The international money power . . . Federal Union will mark the final triumph over stricken mankind of the master of the Labour Party—the international Jewish financier.

The *Free Press*, the organ of the extreme anti-Semitic "Militant Christian Patriots," has taken a similar attitude. It wrote in its November issue:

> The *Free Press* recognises the League of Nations' idea, "Federal Union," and similar schemes as the plan for world domination outlined in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. They are anti-British stunts boosted by Left-wing and Jewish elements who are taking no real part in the war.

Of course, the intellectual confusion is now extreme. Just as Stalin is described as a "betrayer of Socialism," so Hitler, according to the Militant Christian Patriots, has become the "betrayer of National Socialism" since he reached agreement with the U.S.S.R. This body used to support Hitler's Reich. In the October issue of the *Free Press* there appears a cartoon headed "The Betrayal." It depicts Horst Wessel, the Nazi "hero," asking Hitler: "Was it for this we died?" "This" being the alliance with Russia. The *Free Press* depicts Hitler enthroned on a corpse marked "Honour," *Mein Kampf* in hand.

* * *

It was no doubt an item of some news-value that the Groupers were holding a monster rally in the U.S.A. last week. But what induced the B.B.C.—usually a very cautious institution—to devote a quarter of an hour last Friday to celebrating it on the British air. Was it that the Corporation, in view of his rank, could not refuse a request from the Earl of Athlone, or has it been decided that Moral Rearmament is now a British war-aim? Coming as it did at 9.15, immediately after the news—the time allotted to Cabinet Ministers—the Earl's speech, with its long list of mayoral and other dignified Groupers, must have made thousands of listeners believe that Dr. Buchman is now officially accepted by the Government and the T.U.C., whose chairman was specially mentioned. I can hardly think that the Archbishop of York had been consulted: he knows the pro-Nazi bias of the Groups too well. Not that the Earl said with Dr. Buchman: "Thank God for Hitler": his speech, as usually happens after Group Guidance, was a masterpiece of high-minded generalities. As someone said to me: "Chickens get roup, babies get croup, and adults go Group."

* * *

Though many of the evacuated children have drifted back to London, a large proportion still remain in the country and all the reports show that they are immensely improved in health and happiness by their first long holiday in the country. Moreover, the danger zones are still dangerous, and I am not surprised that the authorities are extremely anxious that parents should not bring their children back just because Christmas is coming. The idea of a Christmas Treat Fund to give evacuated children a good time and make their parents feel happy about them is a good one. I hear that donations are pouring in to Mrs. E. M. Lowe, Chairman of the L.C.C. and Treasurer of the Fund, at County Hall. I am looking forward myself to watching the country and town children spending Christmas together. They have rather different ideas about how Christmas should be spent, and the mixture may be amusing.

* * *

A gourmet sends the following gastronomical note: "After mutton bacon, deer sausages. I see Tom Johnson announces venison may be used for sausages, to sell about 8*d.* a lb. If they do come on the market and are properly made I shall be the most eager buyer. 'Properly made' are the operative words though; in the faint hope that someone in authority will attend to me I will here note down the three conditions which will prevent venison sausages tasting like sawdust. First, the meat must be hung longer than beef or pork, for venison is *game*. Secondly, extra fat must be added. Venison is a dry and lean meat, and cannot stand without this addition. Thirdly, many more herbs must be used than butchers use in ordinary sausages, which they seem to season with nothing but pepper. Venison sausages should be more like French sausages than English. But even well made I doubt if they will be popular. The British are far too bigoted about food. I remember Ford Madox Ford saying that he induced a Welsh regiment during the last war to eat venison, pretending it was mutton. After they had made a hearty dinner he told them the truth. The majority of the men were openly revolted, as if they had been tricked into eating beetles, and several, according to Ford, went out and vomited."

* * *

Professor Laski's pamphlet on the *Labour Party, the War and the Future* is one of the most interesting contributions I have yet seen to this discussion of War Aims. It wants much more discussion than I can give it in a note. The Union of Democratic Control has arranged a novel way of getting down to the real difficulties of peace-making by holding a Peoples Peace Conference on Saturday and Sunday next (Saturday at

3, Sunday at 2.30) in the Conway Hall. The idea is to have speakers from different countries, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Italy, India, China and others, to state what they would regard as the necessary basis for peace. Sunday's meeting should be lively, when D. N. Pritt will put the Russian point of view. But that is not the point of the Conference which is to learn from national spokesmen something about the practical problem of peace-making.

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The selection of *This England* quotations which we published in 1937 sold over 25,000 copies. This week the second selection appears, chosen by Mr. V. S. Pritchett from our issues of the last two years, and illustrated, like its predecessor, by Low. Events have lent ironic interest to the quotations about appeasement, Munich and Mr. Chamberlain, but I think people will find most amusement to-day in the extract that illustrates the more comic aspect of our national characteristics—our prudery, insularity, gentility, philistinism, and zoolatry. In a lot of these extracts the writer or speaker, you can see, has been caught off his guard. If he had considered for a moment he would have revised his language for the public. Here undisguised and naked are his real feelings. A serious-minded German might write a singularly mistaken sociological treatise on England by examining the implications of these remarks. But the real value of the book is that it is fun. It contains 80 pages and costs one shilling. It is a good game to look through and pick one's favourite. I find it very difficult to choose. There is the superb advice given by the *Daily Mirror* to a girl suddenly attacked by a man. Mrs. Baldwin's discovery that betrothal put up her batting average; and the *Evening News* writer who met a man who "had never owned a car in his life," and commented: "This struck me as so strange that I wondered how many men one meets to-day could say the same." Then there is the aristocrat who sent hunting trophies to cheer the unemployed. I like the bizarre queries which start one speculating on the possible train of circumstances that led up to them. What story lies behind this advertisement?

> Will the person who borrowed the two Ferrets a month ago and borrowed another on Tuesday night, with a string of onions, return one Ferret and keep the Onions?

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Mrs. Anne Whitney.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

> Mr. Ernest Brown, the Minister of Labour and National Service, whose department issued the pre-war slogan "We've got to be prepared," sets a fine example in living up to this slogan in time of war. Twice recently I have seen him in a restaurant, and both times he was the one man in the room who thought it necessary to eat his lunch with his gas mask slung on his back.—Autolycus in *Sunday Times*.

> Rear-Admiral Beamish asked for a ruling whether he was at complete liberty to tell his constituents what took place at a secret session, as it was his intention to do, unless there was reason against it.
>
> The Speaker said there was no standing order dealing with a secret session except that it should be secret.—*News Chronicle*.

> Where the coaches drove into the yard is now the front door, and the older part of the inn is built round the modern foyer.—From a description of the Clarendon Hotel by the Oxford correspondent of the *Times*.

> Night-time use of Grimsby's A.R.P. shelters by courting couples has resulted in local authorities taking steps to fit all such shelters with locked doors. "The practice has been in existence for some time, but it is now becoming so prevalent that a serious position is created," said an official at Grimsby A.R.P. headquarters. Fortunately we have had no night air raid alarms recently. If there had been any alarms many people would not have been able to find accommodation in the shelters owing to the courting couples inside.—*Nottingham Post*.

THE FISHING INDUSTRY

THE values of steam trawlers rose rapidly with the outbreak of war. Vessels that would not recently have fetched more than their scrap value if offered for sale are now readily marketable, others have more than doubled in value. The war has brought a respite to owners who were fighting a losing battle against financial collapse and one may hazard the guess that the banker mortgagees of trawlers are revising the values of securities which a little while ago were unrealisable.

The explanation of what has happened is simple. Hundreds of steam trawlers have been taken over by the navy for services such as vessels of this type rendered in the last war. The first to go were the largest, the most modern and most powerful, built within the last decade to fish distant waters in the north and north-east, especially about Bear Island. From these waters they brought such prodigious quantities of cod and haddock as our fishing ports had never known. The market was flooded with cheap fish; a new trade, known as the fillet trade, developed. Cod and haddock fillets, all meat, cheap and, on the whole, of fair quality began to supplant the "prime" fishes, or, at the least, to compete with them so severely that the old luxury prices no longer held. Thus, vessels that had depended on small mixed catches of high value both in quality and kind could no longer make a living. Now distant water fishing is suspended, and all fishing is severely restricted. The landings of fish are no more than, if as much as, half of the normal and prices have risen more than proportionately. They will rise higher yet as more trawlers are taken to combat the new menace of mines. For in this country, where the normal consumption of fish per head of the population is the highest in Europe, there is a steady demand for fish from all who can afford to pay for it. Broadly speaking the vessels which stand to profit by these happenings are the least efficient—those whose financial status was recently the least satisfactory.

At present there is no control of the price of trawl fish, so that even after meeting the greatly increased cost of production, there should be a good profit, though it will take long to wipe out the losses of recent years. Later, price control may come into force and alter the situation, though control of the price of a foodstuff so perishable and so variable in quality as fish presents such difficult problems that it will be hard to avoid mistakes in any scheme of price control that may be devised.

Price control is a problem of present day economy. Other problems loom, which are more important, because they are long-term problems. A farseeing Frenchman, who has no illusions about a war of short duration, writes to me: "After the war, we must take steps immediately to prevent another looting"—"pillage" is his French word, and it is appropriate—"of the fishing grounds, which will have restocked themselves under cover of the war, and to avoid a repetition of the mistakes made in this respect after the war of 1914–18." It is to be hoped that this warning will not fall on deaf ears. Before 1914 it was apparent to every competent observer that the North Sea, the most prolific fishing ground in the world, and some other waters on the continental shelf of Europe, were seriously over-fished as a result of the development of modern methods of fishing by high-powered steam vessels. It was the apprehension of depletion of the stocks of food fishes, more than anything else, which led in 1902, to the formation of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. That organisation, consisting of representatives of the Governments interested in the European fisheries outside of the Mediterranean, and their expert advisers, exists for the purpose of organising research internationally with a view to securing, in the words which have become its motto, "the rational exploitation of the sea."

The war of 1914–18 put an end to discussions of protective measures which the Council had suggested. It threatened

also to put an end to the Council, which was deserted by all the belligerent powers except Great Britain. His Majesty's Government recognised the importance of the continuity of the Council's work and continued to support it financially. They thus enabled the neutral countries to nurse the Council through the war so that it was able, little more than a year after the cessation of hostilities, to resume its useful work. Meanwhile most of the fishing grounds had had a four years' respite from overfishing. The North Sea, in particular, had had a nearly complete rest.

With the end of the war and the clearing of the mine-fields, there was a rush to the fishing grounds. They were found to be teeming with fish of good marketable size. The sea seemed to be a gold mine; men with little or no experience bought trawlers at absurd prices; and all, with one accord, set to work to "loot" the replenished fishing grounds. The voices of a few who pointed out that the war had provided a large-scale experiment to prove that the operations of man, and not natural causes, were responsible for the former shortage of fish, and urged accordingly, that fishing should be rationalised, were little regarded. Everybody was determined to scramble for the prize of the moment, to reap the present harvest regardless of the future; in the language of the homely proverb, to make hay while the sun shone; in that of a far-seeing skipper, to "crucify the stock."

In a very few years the catches were down to the pre-war level; once more the small fish began to predominate in the landings—and that is a sure and certain sign of over-fishing.

The most enterprising of the owners built more powerful trawlers and sought new fishing grounds farther afield; but enough were left to keep the home waters still over-fished, with dwindling profit to the catchers of fish. The profits were turned to loss when the Bear Island flooded the market with fish. The supply of fish was maintained and increased though its character was altered. To many it seemed that the problem of the fisheries was solved. But a healthy fishing industry needs variety of fish. The salvation of the near water fisheries was still, and even more, a problem of urgency.

The work of the International Council, in which the British Fisheries Departments played an important part, suggested two methods of checking the progressive depletion of the stocks of fishes. One was the establishment of sanctuaries, the other the regulation of the mesh and the prohibition of the landing and sale of fishes below size limits varying according to the kinds of fish. Sanctuaries were too difficult, for they would necessitate an elaborate and very costly system of patrol. Regulation of the mesh—that is to say fixing a size of mesh which would allow small fish to escape—had been shown to work well for round fish. But a mesh which would allow the escape of flat fishes of the sizes to be protected would allow the escape also of round fishes of good marketable size. The flat fishes could only be protected by the imposition of size limits which, it was hoped, would discourage fishing on grounds where young flat fishes were known to congregate and might induce catchers promptly to return to the water the undersized fish taken.

That these suggestions were sound was not seriously disputed; but to get them put into effect by international agreement was a difficult matter. Great Britain set an example to others by enforcing mesh regulation and size limits nationally. This gesture had its effect and in 1937 a Convention was signed by ten Governments regulating the mesh of trawl nets and imposing size limits for fish. The mesh agreed upon was a considerable improvement upon that commonly in use, though a wider one would have been better and is, indeed, advocated by the most enlightened owners and fishermen.

For the present, however, the mesh regulation fades into insignificance by comparison with the large scale protection which war conditions have again brought about. It is on the effects of that protection and the use to be made of them that my French correspondent wisely insists. It is of the utmost importance that the Governments concerned should be ready to apply protective measures immediately when normal fishing conditions return. We can safely count on a fresh accumulation of fish of good marketable size—unless the war should be, mercifully, much briefer than we expect—and not the most greedy or conservative of catchers of fish could plead any hardship if a considerably larger mesh were then required and higher size limits for fish imposed. If such regulations were immediately adopted and enforced everybody would still get plenty of fish and a large growing stock would be spared year after year to replace what was taken by the nets. Unless, however, the Governments are ready to act without delay when the time comes, the value of the rest given to the fishing grounds will be lost. Past experience shows that a large accumulation of stock can be very quickly wiped out by the fishing methods of to-day intensively applied. Not even the far distant grounds are likely to prove immune against over-fishing. There will be a great opportunity after the war to make the stock on all grounds secure and thus ensure good fishing for future generations.

H. G. MAURICE

THE SIN OF BEING PROVOKING

THE sin of being provoking is, I think, the second oldest sin recorded in history. It was Abel, you will remember, who first committed it when by his carnivorous practices he provoked the fruitarian Cain. At the same time, the story of Cain and Abel suggests that it does not always pay in the end to allow oneself to be provoked by provoking people. Great as is the satisfaction to be got from yielding to anger, Cain obviously did not feel quite happy when he heard the curse laid upon him: "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand."

If ever there was a story with a moral in it, this is one; but it seems to have had surprisingly little effect on human beings who found themselves provoked in later generations. Provocation continued, and was again and again answered with a libation of brother's blood. This seems for the moment to settle things once for all. The belief that it is possible to settle things once for all is one of the most ancient and deep-rooted illusions.

Another excellent moral tale about provocation is the story of Naboth's vineyard. To most of us Naboth would seem to be one of the most harmless and quiet men who ever lived. His only crime was to possess a vineyard hard by the palace of Ahab King of Samaria. There is nothing to suggest that he was not a good neighbour, but even to be a neighbour can be provocative. It has certainly proved so again and again in international affairs. Hence we cannot be surprised that Ahab, provoked by the neighbourhood of a small, powerless vinegrower, attempted to negotiate a pact with Naboth, offering what a Bolshevik to-day would regard as exceptionally generous terms. "Give me thy vineyard," he said, "that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near my house; and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seems good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money."

Nothing, Dr. Goebbels would say, could be fairer than that. Naboth, however, possibly incited by the Winston Churchill of the day, displayed a surprising obstinacy. "The Lord forbid it me," he said, "that I should give thee the inheritance of my fathers." In a just world that would have been the end of the matter, but Ahab regarded the answer as outrageous, went to bed, turned away his face, and would eat no bread. To Queen Jezebel, the Lady Macbeth of her time, this seemed a feeble way in which to deal with a neighbour who clung tenaciously to the inheritance of his fathers. So she brought her propagandist brain into action and decided to invent enough lies about Naboth to convict him in the eyes of all decent people. "Let thine heart be merry," she told Ahab, and "she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth. And she wrote in the letters saying Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high

among the people. And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the King. And then carry him out and stone him that he may die." The technique, you must agree, was perfect. I doubt whether even the best brains of the twentieth century could have bettered it.

No more than Cain's murder of Abel, however, did the murder of Naboth settle the matter. Scarcely was Ahab in possession of his new territory when Elijah the Tishbite arrived with a most disturbing message. "Arise," the Lord had said to him "go down to meet Ahab King of Israel, who is in Samaria. Behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even there." It cannot be said that Ahab's success was more than temporary.

Whether getting rid of provoking people is always a failure in the end is, I admit, doubtful. Aesop's fable of the provoking lamb and the provoked wolf suggest that in the animal world at least the drastic methods of Cain and Jezebel sometimes pay. Perhaps, however, it is unfair to compare the wolf with Cain or Jezebel, since the wolf after all would have had to eat some lamb or other in order to keep alive. Cain and Jezebel could have lived in perfect health without killing, but the wolf could not. Why the wolf employed the modern technique of false accusation when all he had to do was to kill the lamb for dinner in the usual straightforward way, it is difficult to understand. Possibly there are animals, as there are human beings, who love lying and crooked dealing for their own sake. Or, perhaps, the wolf of Aesop was more like a human being than other wolves.

I wish I had some knowledge of history so that I might be able to give a detailed account of the part that the sin of being provoking has played in it. Did the children of Israel find the Amalekites and the Jebusites and all those other "ites" provoking? The story of Joseph and his brethren makes it clear that they were an easily provoked people. Joseph in most respects seems to have been as innocent as a lamb, but he had an unfortunate habit of describing his dreams, living as he did in an age before Freud had taught people to keep mum about such matters. And his brethren, being ignorant of the Freudian symbolism, misinterpreted the dreams and were provoked to such a point that most of them decided that the only satisfying way to relieve their feelings was Cain's way.

Many people look on innocence as an attractive quality and are surprised by the attitude of Joseph's brethren to probably the most innocent member of the family. But there must be a large number of human beings who find innocence exasperating. The story that is told in the four Gospels is proof of this. Here is a story of perfect innocence provoking respectable people to such a point that they adopted the methods of Cain rather than endure it. The story was repeated again and again later on among the early Christians in Rome. It has been suggested in modern times that the early Christians were not nearly so innocent as we once believed—that in some respects, indeed, they were as exasperating as the militant Suffragettes. I feel sure, however, that it was their innocence that chiefly provoked their persecutors. Innocence is a silent accusation of the rest of us, and we do not like to be justly accused.

It is not easy to tell whether innocence in nations has as provoking an effect as innocence in individuals. It is not easy to tell, indeed, whether a perfectly innocent nation has ever existed. The Greek cities kept being provoked by each other, but one does not think of any of them as being particularly innocent. Nor does one think of Rome as growing great at the expense of entirely innocent neighbours. Greed rather than hatred of innocence is the main motive behind the accumulation of empire. It is in the story of Naboth's vineyard that we find the best summary of the history of Imperialism. I am not sure, for example, that Ireland was a perfectly innocent country when Strongbow invaded it. The offence of Ireland was to be an independent and not too powerful island within a comparatively few miles of the English coast. There is nothing more provoking than the neighbourhood of an independent and not too powerful nation; and England, having been duly provoked, explained to the Pope that the Irish were bad Catholics and asked him for a Bull permitting them to send troops across the Irish Sea and restore order in the Church. The Pope, being an Englishman, is said by most authorities to have given it.

In our own time, ex-Naboth's vineyards have multiplied to an extraordinary degree. If the modern Ahabs have their way the map of Europe will be dotted with ex-Naboth's vineyards from the Caspian Sea to the Atlantic Ocean. Years ago, Georgia provoked the Russians by her proximity and powerlessness, and now she is a Soviet garden of herbs. More recently we have had the provoking example of Austria which could be made a good neighbour only by being devoured. Then came Czechoslovakia whose freedom at the very gates of Germany provoked Herr Hitler almost to the point of apoplexy. Poland followed. It was a provocation to be so close to two great powers. And, last, we have had the Finns provoking Russia by rejecting an Ahab's offer for their fathers' inheritance. Nor must we forget that Japan has been doing some pretty Ahab work in China. Ahab versus Naboth is the world-game of the hour. "Hast thou killed and also taken possession?"—in that question, perhaps, was pronounced the doom, not only of Ahab himself, but of all the Ahabs of our century who have been provoked by the wickedness of their neighbours in being unwilling to give in. How long will it be before the potential Ahabs of the world realise that the sin of being provoking is venial in comparison with the crime of being provoked?

Y.Y.

A SCIENTIFIC ARM

"WHAT, teacher, can that object be inside a plate-glass drum?"
"It is Prof. Haldane whom you see, testing a vacuum."

"Why are they hurling bombs so near that shelter made of tin?"
"That is a bombproof test, I hear, Prof. Haldane is within."

"Oh, look! From yon balloon so high what dangles large and limp?"
"It is Prof. Haldane, we espy, air testing from a blimp."

"See drifting near the waterside that buoy of strange design!"
"That is Professor Haldane, tied, decoying of a mine.

"On sea, on shore and in the air, protecting us from harm,
Prof. Haldane meets us everywhere—our scientific arm."

SAGITTARIUS

Miscellany

COUNTRY NOTES

December

DECEMBER is a dull time in the garden. Few things are in flower. It is an interesting time for the practical gardener, who knows that this is the very moment of the year when he can shift and split his plants; but for the amateur who wants to see something in bloom always, it must be admitted to be dull. The amateur therefore relies on bulbs for early forcing: Narcissus Paper White, Roman hyacinths, other hyacinths, and tulips. He orders his supply as soon as the catalogues begin to arrive in August, having been told that the nurserymen execute their orders in rotation. He puts his bulbs into

soil or fibre; and by this time he has probably taken most of them out of their dark cupboard, hoping that they are now "nicely rooted" and can afford to have their poor bleached noses exposed to the light. By Christmas, he thinks, he ought to have some bowls flowering on his table.

For years I also have followed this procedure, without ever having the curiosity to wonder what exactly was meant by "bulbs for early forcing." I supposed vaguely that the expression referred to bulbs which, grown under suitable conditions, might be persuaded to flower earlier than if they were planted in the ordinary way out of doors. I have just discovered my mistake. It appears that the bulb for early forcing has undergone a special process; the hyacinth, for instance, requires to be lifted when the leaves are still green, the leaves are then cut off, and the bulb stored for a time in a temperature of 85 deg. F. The narcissus, on the other hand, requires to be kept at the relatively low temperature of 48 deg. F. Tulips make demands of their own. Nobody knows the exact reason for these variations, which are supposed to be connected with the mysteries of the flower-forming hormones.

These and other curious facts I learnt from a book called *Science Lends a Hand in the Garden* (Putnam 10s. 6d.) Its author, Sir Frederick Keeble, who once earned my gratitude by giving me a prescription for making yew hedges grow with unbelievable rapidity and strength, is a professor of botany who delights in the odd by-ways of botanical science. It is pleasant to discover from his pages that science now endorses such old superstitions as the one about plant-growth and moonshine. Country lore, as usual, turns out to be right. One must, however, be very careful. A mere two days in the wrong direction may make all the difference. Maize must be sown two days before the moon is full; cabbages resent the new moon; radishes and carrots demand no moon at all. Sow them when she is round, and they will emulate her—"too big," says Sir Frederick sadly; "much too big."

Teasing Bees

The bee, as most people know, is a foolish insect devoid of the power of reasoning. It is capable of doing a few specialised things supremely well, but once you interfere with its routine arrangements it is lost. Thus although it can fly for long distances in search of nectar, returning safely to its hive, it is incapable of finding that hive if you meanwhile have moved it a paltry twenty yards from the spot where the bee expected to find it. I have never tested the truth of this assertion for myself, but an old bee-keeper of my acquaintance assured me that it was indeed a fact. Sir Frederick, and I do not blame him, is not proof against the temptation of teasing bees.

He does not undertake these experiments merely to prove that the insect is a fool, but to endorse the more pleasing theory that it is, by nature, a dancer. A bee, he says, will not alight upon a flower unless that flower is in motion, a statement which we might all corroborate for ourselves by observation next summer. The lightest breeze will suffice. Now Sir Frederick places pots of natural or artificial flowers on a turn-table (bees, he notes, seem to prefer the artificial), and as soon as the table and pots are set in twirling motion, the bees will settle on the flowers. This taste for movement is reflected also in the bee's own behaviour. A certain Professor von Frisch has observed the method by which scout-bees inform the rest of the hive where nectar is to be obtained. The scout returns from his foray with loaded honey-bag; and, redolent of his new discovery, performs a dance inside the hive until the scent which he diffuses so intoxicates his fellow-workers that they take flight themselves in search of the new treasure. So says Professor von Frisch.

If one were granted a number of lives instead of only one, it would be agreeable to devote one of them to some study such as the habits of bees. Professor von Frisch has made prolonged experiments to discover whether bees are colour-blind or not, and has come to the conclusion that they are not. They can distinguish between all the colours of the spectrum; red alone eludes them, and they see it as black. Nor are they very definite about violet and purple; and yellow bothers them in relation to orange and green. How soothing it would be, to spend one life in a world focused on such gentle and unnecessary observation!

Far from this, a catalogue I have just received includes the following item:

Collections for covering mounds of air-raid shelters: berberis, cotoneaster, cydonia, etc.

V. SACKVILLE-WEST

HOMAGE TO WILLIAM BARNES

IT is surprising that William Barnes has not been more widely worshipped. Perhaps there was a touch of pride in his gentleness, which led him to conceal himself from notoriety beneath the veil of the Dorset dialect. The veil is slight: anyone can lift it after half an hour's reading. Yet it seems to have served his purpose, and to have confined him to the audience whom he loved. He should have been a popular poet, for he writes of matters which move everyone and in a way which everyone can understand. There is no mysticism in him beyond the trust that we shall, through the goodness of God, be reunited to the dead whom we have loved. There is no difficult or disturbing view of society, no crankiness, no harshness of diction or thought. He is truly, sweetly, affectionately, a Yes-man, and considering how many worthless Yes-men are being boosted to-day as national assets, it is surprising that he should have been left alone, he a clergyman, he a schoolmaster, he of the soil. Propaganda has passed him by. He has been left where he wished, to his own people, and to the few outsiders who have cared to lift the veil and win an easy and a rich reward. To read him is to enter a friendly cottage where a family party is in full swing. One misses many of the allusions, one is not connected with the party by blood, yet one has no sense of intrusion. The party, like all unsophisticated gatherings, welcomes the entire human race. And when, to the jokes and the chatter, there is added the scent of the roses at the casement, and the sighing of the wind down the lane, and the memory of the past loveliness and kindness that are gone—and faith in the future—loveliness and kindness that will return with the next generation—the effect is overwhelming. It is impossible to read a poem like *Woak Hill* without tears in one's eyes. Or rather, if one has not tears in one's eyes at the end of "Woak Hill" one has not read it. It is impossible to praise the author of *Uncle and Aunt* in the balanced language of the study. "I shake hands with you in my heart," wrote an old Dorsetshire servant from her London basement-kitchen. Those are the words in which he has to be praised.

If, suspicious of so much amiability, we start pulling him to pieces, we discover that contrary to expectation he is a scholar. Like A. E. Housman, he knew exactly what he was doing in verse, and he knew what others had done. He sang Dorset because he had to, but not without premeditation he was not the gifted rustic who smudged some of the effects in Burns. *Woak Hill* itself is composed in an elaborate Persian metre, the Pearl, and even those who discount its pathos are obliged to admire its dexterity. Other poems are written as Ghazels, others imitate or adapt recondite Bardic metres, and all of them have their words in the right places. Light words—rose-petals of words, withered leaves, red dowst o' the ridges; but they fall into their places with the assurance of marble.

Sweet Be'mi'ster, that bist a-bound
By green an' woody hills all round,
Wi' hedges, reache'n up between
A thousan' vields o'zummer green,
Where elems' lofty heads do drow
Their sheädes vor hay-meäkers below,
An' wild hedge-flow'r's do charm the souls
O' maïdens in their evenèn strolls.

The technical skill of "wild hedge-flow'r's" is notable; the

verse is heavily pulled up by the lightest element in its subject-matter. We pause, we put on the brake for flowers, and the scenes through which we have been sliding coalesce and are saved from too much smoothness. In the last line the natural speed of the verse is released. Forward we go again, after having been clamped by beauty. It is amazing that a writer who always puts the heart first can so keep his head. His genius worked not by a series of happy hits but by using the poetic intelligence, and it is the more amazing since his prose-intelligence was provincial. He believed, for instance, that only Anglo-Saxon words should be employed in English, and he wrote a philological grammar in which vowels become "breath-sounds," and consonants "clippings." To believe this and yet to create touching poetry in which Anglo-Saxon words are mainly employed is a unique achievement.

His life—except for the loss of his beloved wife and for an occasional trouble over his school—was a very happy life. His temperament, though profound, was equable. He was rooted where he could grow, and was never assailed by lusts or nerve-storms. He could live through the Labourers' Revolt of 1830 without its shadows falling across his verse, and he could help his good neighbour, Colonel Shrapnel, with some mathematical formulae. Colonel Shrapnel was working out a new type of explosive. When the railway was extended to Dorchester it vexed some people but he and his pupils found some fine geological specimens in the chalk cuttings. Even the new stove so unwisely installed at St. Peter's did not function fatally. "The carbonic acid gas (writes his daughter) which rose from beneath the floor of the aisles had first the effect of making the little children drop down insensible, and one by one they were carried out. Next the more delicate young people succumbed, among whom were two or three of William Barnes's household. At length even the strong ones began to suffer and went out in groups, leaving the rector preaching to empty benches, very much bewildered to know what was happening, for the heavy fumes had not yet reached him in the pulpit. The streets were full of groups of suffering people, helping to support others more suffering than themselves. One young woman fell into a swoon which lasted three hours." All this he survived. The little trials of life, like its deeper sorrows, were accepted by him bravely, and with the belief that joy must prevail. For the joy beyond death he had the authority of his Church; for joy upon earth he could point to the recurring generations of village life:

> Vor daughters ha' mornen when mothers ha' night,
> An' there's beauty alive when the feäirest is dead;
> As when woone sparklèn weäve do sink down from the light,
> Another do come up an' catch it instead.

Yet the heart retains its preferences and joy is compatible with personal loss:

> Smile on, happy maïdens! but I shall noo mwore
> Zee the maid I do miss under evenèn's dim sky,
> An' my heart is a-touch'd to see you avore
> The doors, vor to chatty an' zee vo'k goo by.

Out of the goodness of his heart, his muse commends sweetness, modesty, innocent mirth, piety, domesticated manliness. He never destroys and seldom criticises, and those who believe that no poetry can be great unless it is rebellious will condemn him as too Sunday-schoolish. But a muse can attend a Sunday school. She disobeys all rules. "There can be no art without love" he wrote. That too is a rule, and therefore not universally true, but it is true of his own art. He gathered up all the happiness and beauty he could see around him, he invented more, he poured it out as a continuous offering upon the countryside, and when he was told that the offering would from its nature perish he replied: "To write in what some may deem a fast out-wearing speech-form may seem as idle as the writing of one's name in snow on a spring day. I cannot help it. It is my mother tongue, and it is to my mind the only true speech of the life that I draw."

In his old age, as he sat by the fire in the comfortable rectory at Came, he heard the garden gate clanging behind some friends who had just left him, perhaps for ever. The sound moved him to poetry, and he called his daughter and began to dictate *The Geäte a-vallèn to.*

> In the zunsheen of our summers
> Wi' the hay time now a-come
> How busy wer we out a'vield
> Wi' vew a-left at hwome,
> When waggons rumbled out ov yard,
> Red-wheeled wi' body blue,
> And back behind 'em loudly slamm'd
> The geäte a-vallèn to.

When he had finished dictating he paused, and listened to the sounds clanging back through the centuries. "Observe that word 'geäte'" he said. "That is how King Alfred would have pronounced it, and how it was called in the *Saxon Chronicle*, which tells us of King Edward, who was slain at Corfe's geäte." He paused again and continued: "Ah! if the Court had not been moved to London, then the speech of King Alfred, of which our Dorset is the remnant, would have been the Court language of to-day."

William Barnes had not many regrets, but this was one of them.

E. M. FORSTER

SHOPPING

BELOW the sealskin coat
The high-heeled ankles give,
Someone is suffering from
A dead prerogative,

Trailing from shop to shop,
Pondering what to buy,
Ignoring like Belshazzar
The writing on the sky.

IDEALIST

HE lived among blue prints
For a castle in the air,
Perfecting it on paper
Year by year,

Who finds now that his building
Subsidy is gone
And has not even the air
To build his castle on.

LOUIS MACNEICE

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Julius Cæsar" (in Modern Dress), at the Embassy

"Modern dress" is not the same thing as topicality, and people may be put off by hearing that some of the characters in *Julius Caesar* wear, not trousers and stiff collars, but Nazi uniforms. The experiment, however, is a triumphant success. Hackneyed but splendid words win new life; the dilemmas of Brutus (who is excellently played by Godfrey Kenton) belong to the twentieth century A.D. no less than to the first century B.C. The actual similarity between Germany of 1933 and the Rome of Caesar comes through strikingly but is not unduly emphasised. Caesar is the dictator about to establish himself; he is murdered, as Hitler might have been, by conservatives and soldiers, inspired by a mixture of jealousy and high patriotism. The result, it should be noticed, is not to end the dictatorship, but to begin one that lasted four hundred years! Mr. Herrey has made a very good job of the settings, particularly in the first half of the play. The difficulties of the battle scenes are obvious, but Philippi and the Flanders front differ less than might have been expected. Judicious cuts in the last Act have not damaged the play and the device, which sounds at first rather drastic, of making the parley between Antony and Caesar on the one hand and Brutus and Cassius on the other into a field-telephonic conversation comes off well enough. Some of the actors should take more trouble with their words: you must not gabble Shakespeare to hide passages that do not fit modern dress. But *Julius Caesar* suffers surprisingly little in this way: it is a rhetorical rather than a poetic drama.

Walter Hudd, who is a most accomplished actor, gives a most convincing picture of Julius Caesar as a weak, conceited and affected dictator. There will be more controversy about Mr. Anthony Hawtrey's presentation of Casca. The first speech in which Casca describes the offer of a crown to Caesar comes perfectly from a sort of Bertie Wooster character. Perhaps this conception of Casca was built round this first speech? It scarcely fits Casca's subsequent behaviour and to do Mr. Hawtrey justice he drops the affectation and plays the rest of the part with more intelligence than consistency. This is a first-class performance, well worth the trouble of getting to Swiss Cottage in the black-out.

"Husbands or Lovers," coming shortly, at the Plaza. "Come on George," at the Leicester Square.

Husbands or Lovers is a comedy, not crazy but just slightly daft, presenting the successful team from *Café Society*, Madeleine Carroll and Fred MacMurray, in a series of situations less classy and far more exasperating. Madeleine Carroll plays a business executive who has shelved love in favour of her career. When she meets Fred MacMurray, a cocoa planter from Bali, she almost falls for domesticity, but not quite. Fred MacMurray, to awaken Miss Carroll's mother-instinct, plays a trump card by parking a baby girl, daughter of an old pal who is dying, rather tardily, from war wounds (does one detect propaganda?) in Miss Carroll's apartment. Miss Carroll does not at first respond, but finally she teaches baby to pray, and then, to escape the temptations of marriage, runs away, baby and all, to Nassau. Then follows a madcap chase; Nassau, New York, Bali, New York, providing opportunities for the camera which are practically ignored, even Miss Carroll's five minute visit to Bali being given only the most casual glance. At lap three, and not a moment too soon, Miss Carroll is cornered. The characters would have to look very nice and talk rather well to get away with this—they almost succeed.

George Formby's films are usually shown only in the provinces where he enjoys an enormous popularity. *Come On George*, in which Mr. Formby is now presented to the West End, is a vehicle dull enough to dim the brightest star. The film is a sort of British *Day at the Races* distinguished by its complete lack of originality; its ingredients are all the stock situations of comedy, from the chases and custard pies of early Chaplin to reminiscences of the consulting-room and race-course of late Marx. Mr. Formby has a North Country accent, a gigantic expanse of teeth, and a sort of self-effacing "little man" appeal. He sings pleasantly to the banjo and makes broad jokes with disarming sangfroid, but that does not seem to be enough and the mystery of his wide popularity remains unsolved. This film has been shown already in France, not only to the B.E.F. but also to the French in the Maginot Line; let us hope it has caused no rift in the *Entente*.

"The Unicorn from the Stars," at the Chanticleer

The first London production of a Yeats play is something of an event, and Messrs. Temple and Chandos are to be congratulated on unearthing this characteristic example of its author's mystical mood. By austere critical standards it is an unsatisfactory piece of writing: the story of a youthful visionary who misinterprets his vision of unicorns trampling grapes as an injunction to destroy the kingdoms of the world, and only realises its spiritual significance after leading the peasantry to burn down the Big House, is a little too clumsy in construction and stagey in conception to be an unqualified success. But though Yeats' mysticism may be suspect in this instance, his dramatic sense is at its best, and the play, though in prose, contains some powerful and picturesque imagery. The Chanticleer are fortunate in assembling a strong cast, most of them possess or have mastered genuine Irish accents. Mr. Thesiger steals the play from a secondary part; Mr. Terence O'Brien, as the banished priest, looks rood-racked and soul-shocked in the proper Hopkins manner; Miss Natalie Moya knows how to wear a shawl, and Mr. Brefni O'Rorke makes the most of his weak part. Mr. Peter Osborn fails to convince as the mystic: one feels that his angels have been to Trinity. *Hyacinth Halvey* is brought on as a curtain-raiser, and though Lady Gregory's comedy is as delightful as ever, the acting is so terrifically and inexplicably bad that the less said about it the better.

London Ballet at the Arts Theatre Club
Ballet Rambert at the Duchess

Mr. Harold Rubin's acquisition of the Arts Theatre Club promises more than a permanent stage for ballet and social club for dancers; for he has announced that he hopes to build up a collection of "Archives of the Dance" comparable to Rolf de Maré's international repository in Paris. If it is to be really comparable it will include researches into far other dance traditions than ballet, and the collection of films, gramophone records, photographs and written studies—in fact the establishment of a long needed choreological centre. The first programme of the London Ballet, under the choreographic direction of Anthony Tudor (absent in America), was not remarkable for its originality, despite the première of Keith Lester's *Pas des Déesses*, to music by César Pugni, with setting and costumes after contemporary lithographs. These were charming, and so was the dancing of the ballerinas, but the choreography was tedious and conventional, and there was no good male dancing. We very much enjoyed the première of Frank Staff's *Czernyana*, produced by the Rambert Ballet in a programme of which every item is delightful. This light-hearted, charmingly composed ballet realises to perfection the dance qualities of Czerny's exquisite studies which we all played in our youth so much less beautifully than the pianists at the Duchess Theatre. The decor, by Eve Swinstead Smith, is appropriately slight and effectively lighted. The costumes are refreshing and the ballet is beautifully danced. Frank Staff is a real acquisition to Mme. Rambert's young dancer-choreographs. He is also a delightful dancer. But why did he discard his Paganini wig in the role of the sham virtuoso in *La Muse s'amuse?* As his muse, Sally Gilmour was exquisite and amusing. The closing scene is in Andrée Howard's best style. She has also a genius for making the music she has chosen (in this case Déodat de Sévérac) seem to have been specially written for her ballets. Sally Gilmour, in a different mood, is equally delightful in *Death and the Maiden*, and Elizabeth Schooling is both beautiful and a dancer of great promise. Arensky's ravishing waltz out of his Second Suite for two pianos was enchantingly played by Mr. John Simons and Mr. Guy Jonson as a musical interlude. Hommage au Ballet Rambert! If people really cared for poetry and invention in ballet, combined with a high standard of dancing, the Duchess Theatre would be full every night.

English Watercolours at the Lefevre
Susan Palmer and Vivian John at the Calmann

In watercolours we do not expect, though we may sometimes find, grandeur of design; we look in the first place for the pianistic virtue of touch. The medium, therefore, is particularly well suited to English painters, and the exhibition at the Lefevre offers some delightful examples. Mr. Wilson Steer's facility in watercolour has often led him to repeat a formula, but *The White Yacht* is thoughtful and charming. At the opposite pole is Miss Frances Hodgkins's *Road to Barcelona*, in which she weaves out of gouache a most splendid decoration. Duncan Grant is always on the top of his form when using pastel, and his decorative nude in this show shows exemplary skill in purposeful distortion. A most delightful and musical work. Mrs. Bell's *Marie Antoinette* and *Queen Alexandra* show her feeling for period and character—a virtue which she too rarely allows herself the chance of using. Mr. Victor Pasmore in his little painting of a girl in a punt uses quiet tones and suggestive drawing with dazzling skill. Miss Katharine Church's *Evacuee*, Leslie Hunter's *Venice* and *Lobster*, Lady Patricia Ramsay's *Tulips*, Mrs. Cora Gordon's *Geese*, Mr. Keith Bayner's circus sketches and Miss Ethel Walker's *Tanagra* are other works that specially take the eye.

At the Calmann Gallery in St. James's Place Miss Susan Palmer and Miss Vivian John are exhibiting some pretty and sensitive pictures. Miss Palmer's work is of the unassertive sort that looks better in a room than in an exhibition. The view of Beaucaire and the well-composed *Bren-Gun Carriers* are good examples. Miss Vivian John has not yet settled into the rut of a style. Two of her pictures show the influence of Derain. She manifests a natural gift for painting, especially in a landscape and in a picture of a river with bathers.

THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, December 8th—

Exhibition of Contemporary Chinese Paintings, China Institute, 16 Gordon Square. Open till Jan. 12th.

Mass Meeting of Socialist Party of Gt. Britain, Conway Hall, 6.30.

SATURDAY, December 9th—

Chinese Bazaar, 18 North Audley Street, 10—8. To Dec. 16.

Fabian Week-end Conference: "The Home Front," Ambassadors Hotel, W.C.1. Particulars from Fabian Society.

British Youth Peace Assembly Conference, Holborn Hall, 2.30.

Courtauld-Sargent Concert, Queens Hall, 2.30.

SUNDAY, December 10th—
Prof. Susan L. Stebbing: "The Need and Difficulty of an Ideal," Conway Hall, 11.
Popular Concert, Embassy Theatre, 3.
D. N. Pritt: "Peace and the U.S.S.R.," Cecil Sharp House, 8.15.
MONDAY, December 11th—
Lunch Hour Concerts, Mary Ward Settlement, Monday–Friday, 1.
TUESDAY, December 12th—
China Campaign Committee Lunch, Prof. R. H. Tawney: "The Post-War Economic Development of China," Young's Chinese Restaurant, Wardour Street, 1. Tickets, 2s. 6d., from Committee.
William F. Nicholson: "Federal Unionism," Friends House, 1.20.
Performance by the Ballets Jooss in aid of Society for the Protection of Science and Learning, Cambridge Arts Theatre, 2.30.
WEDNESDAY, December 13th—
Fabian Lunch, A. V. Alexander: "The Food Situation," National Trade Union Club, 1. Tickets, 2s. 6d., from 11 Dartmouth Street, S.W.1.
THURSDAY, December 14th—
Dr. Lucy P. Mair: "Anthropology and Indirect Rule," Canterbury Hall, Cartwright Gardens, W.C.1, 4.30.
G Strauss: "Why This War?" 2 Keats Grove, 7.45.
FRIDAY, December 15th—
Lionel Penrose: "Eugenic Aspects of a Survey of 1,280 Cases of Mental Deficiency," Royal Society, 5.15.

Correspondence

STALINISM

SIR,—The sarcasm of your note last week on "Russia's Patience" (towards Finland) went home, but not at one point. You wrote: "With a spontaneity that the Kremlin is wholly unable to check, the mass-meetings of Russia's workers in all her factories are calling upon Stalin to execute the dictates of justice upon aggressive neighbours," which is an ironical way of saying that it is quite incredible that they would approve of the invasion of Finland. I am afraid that statement would only make Stalin grin; he knows the minds of his proletariat have been too long and too thoroughly "conditioned" to have an independent opinion on any subject. But ask yourself this also: why should a Russian Communist who at home accepts ruthlessness as a necessary part of the most perfect system of government the world has seen, object to its being used abroad? How can you expect Russians who have seen two million or so of their own peasant-farmers driven starving from their homes to feel compunction at the idea of Finnish roads crowded with refugees from burning homesteads? Only a short time ago Stalin had several thousand Russian officers—for no discoverable reason—shot. Why, then, should the workers of Russia regard it as anything but legitimate propaganda if, after bombing the bourgeois of Helsinki in their flats, their Führer orders fifty times as many Finns to be put to death? I see (Dec. 5th) that the *Izvestia* actually promises the Russian proletariat that the defenders of Finland "will be liquidated in the near future."

What hideous facts that soothing synonym conceals! But there is, in addition, a clinching proof that your irony is, alas, misplaced. At this very moment Russians are celebrating the third anniversary of Stalin's Democratic Constitution, and celebrating it (to use the words of their Press) as "the most democratic system of representation in the world," which of course implies that it is a far more perfect method of reflecting public opinion than exists in England, America and the Scandinavian countries. The Russo-German alliance involved as violent a *volte face* for a Bolshevik as a Nazi. We gathered that a good many Nazis found it at first difficult to swallow. But was a whisper of temporary perplexity heard from the Russian people? Twelve hours after the Kremlin had declared (*à la* Hitler) that Russia had no intention of invading Finland, the Red Army marched and Helsinki and other towns were bombed. Has one voice in Russia suggested, that if Germany's seizure of Czechoslovakia for strategic reasons was abominable, the conquest of Finland from similar motives, might also be wrong? The world has been listening attentively: silence. Now that shows either that your irony is misplaced, or that the Democratic Socialism of Stalin is an imposture. The latter alternative brings me to something that I want badly to say to "A Conscript Comrade" who also wrote in the same issue a letter as sympathic to me as your sarcasms.

In your note I read a bitter disillusionment; in his letter something more pathetic in the young—fear lest his Faith in the future should be plundered by those in whose keeping he had placed it. And in a measure I can sympathise with him. For though for a reason with which I shall conclude, I was never confident that the Russian experiment would prove a blessing to mankind, who could refrain from hoping that after such rivers of blood, such mountains of human misery, something permanently valuable might be established? And for years Russia, alone among nations, seemed the one power to stand for, at any rate, international decency. In foreign policy Russia was an example to the world. But now, when the Kremlin opens its mouth, it emits the stench of decay and cynical bunkum. "We are *not* at war with Finland": so said Japan as she invaded China. "The message summoning the session of the League of Nations is slanderous and offensive and incompatible with the respect due to the U.S.S.R." Does not "Conscript Comrade" recognise the voice of Mussolini? "We are freeing Finland," so Hitler and Mussolini declared when they crushed the Government of Spain. "We are fighting for the safety of the Soviet frontiers": that Hitler said when he absorbed the Czechs. The "Conscript Comrade," who also speaks for others, says his trust in Russia is not shaken. Well, to keep it may entail a good deal of self-deception. He says that what distinguishes him from liberal reformers is his "conviction that Socialism (or Communism) is essentially just." He is wrong. What distinguishes Communists from every shade of Socialist is that they are not Democrats. Like Nature they do not care a pin for the individual; like Nature they have shown themselves "red in tooth and claw":

> So careful of the type she seems,
> So careless of the single life,

might have been written of Communism too. You cannot practise "political realism" at home and not incline to it abroad. If you have frequent connection with Murder in the end you will syphilise your soul, become blind to the welfare of your fellow men, and at last care only for power and the system you have set up; no matter how humane the vision with which you started. That explains Stalin. DESMOND MACCARTHY

SIR,—To many like myself the Russian invasion of Finland will have come as the bitterest blow yet inflicted by the world-upheaval. In face of the ceaseless flow of anti-Soviet propaganda it has been necessary to emphasise Russia's valuable achievements, the building up of a socialist civilisation and the pursuance of a pacific, non-imperialist foreign policy, and to speak little of her defects. This has led to a tendency to regard Russia from a perfectionist standpoint, and there is a danger that those who have been most liable to this tendency will be swept away by emotional disillusionment so as to forget that the former achievement remains unaffected by the faults of Russia's rulers.

On the other hand, I hope that responsible individuals and groups on the Left will, without exception, express their disapproval of Russia's action. Should they fail to do so their silence and its implications will do irreparable damage to Socialism in this country. No end justifies the means; and I for one have no intention of concealing my detestation of an act of aggression which is as brutal as any crime committed by the Fascist Powers.

London. KENNETH INGRAM

FINLAND

SIR,—It is ironic the Russian attack on Finland has come at this particular time: 1940 was to have seen not only the final payments of the debt to the United States, but also the coming into operation of the old-age and disablement pensions. That Finland is not so far ahead as other Scandinavian countries in standard of living and social services is hardly her fault. Sweden and Norway had a long start in the race for democracy. Though, in Finland, the poor with large families have not yet been given housing subsidies, nobody who has seen the "extravagant" orphanage in Helsinki and the garden cottages and forest camps, is likely to think further advances were not contemplated and passionately desired.

The immense difficulties Finland has had to overcome in recent years are, perhaps, imperfectly understood in this country. Her first Left-wing Government to achieve stability (in 1936) was a coalition of Social Democrats and Agriculturalists who had fought on opposite sides in the last war. In spite of this, they have co-operated magnificently. Though trade unions are still weak, consumer's co-operation is strong; but even this has been hampered by the unfortunate differences between the rural and urban societies.

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★ But there are reasons during wartime which give this "acquaintance subscription" offer an added significance. It is vitally important that British views should be disseminated as widely as possible, particularly in the neutral countries. We think you will agree, too, that copies of the paper will be found most acceptable to members of the Forces, abroad and at home.

★ Apart, therefore, from your friends at home or in the Colonies, we hope this year you will give particular thought to friends in the neutral countries and the Forces.

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Another difficulty—smaller yet very real—is that of the Swedish-speaking Finns in the south, who form 10 per cent. of the total Finnish population. Great prizes—of place and power—were theirs in the past. While some, no doubt, abused their power, others helped to make Finland's culture the fine thing it is.

One thing is certain. All who are acquainted with the frugal, honest, fearless and hard-working Finnish people, are thankful that toughness, also, is one of their national characteristics. It is difficult not to feel bitter—at this time when Finland stands utterly alone.

M. C. ANNESLEY

80 Eccleston Square, S.W.1.

CHRISTIANITY IN WARTIME

SIR,—Some weeks ago you published some amusing verses by Archibald Oldys, describing the complacent meditations of a lady attending the soothing services in Westminster Abbey; in that atmosphere she was encouraged to pray that our Empire might be kept undismembered; and she reminds the Almighty that our nation stands for:

> Books from Boot's and country lanes,
> Free speech, free passes, class distinction,
> Democracy and proper drains.

She feels sure that the great traditions of the Abbey stand for bombing the Germans, keeping the system going at all costs, and providing for her a crown in heaven and her securities on earth.

Her petition that her well-appointed mansion in Cadogan Square and the vested interests which it symbolises should be "Put beneath Thy Special Care," would surely be answered by the God of all Comforts in this secure and somnolent House of Prayer. It is all a question of dates; she was fortunate in not attending the Abbey on the occasions when the preachers were the Bishop of Bristol, the Dean of Canterbury, Canon Thompson Elliott, Canon Marriott, Archdeacon Donaldson, and others.

Dean Hewlett Johnson's "bombs" are not those with which we bomb the Germans, but such places as Cadogan Square, and the lady's meditations would have been disturbed by Canon Marriott's allusions to the Christian Revolution in his Abbey sermon on the last Sunday in October, a revolution which would mean in International affairs "the changeover from internecine rivalry to gain the world's wealth to international co-operation to share the world's wealth," while, so far as home politics are concerned, "it would mean the abolition of that glaring social injustice which has produced our distressed areas with all their suffering, misery and poverty, in days when a sufficiency was available for all."

It was on the occasion of this sermon that many walked out. Possibly preferring luncheon appointments in Cadogan Square to hearing any more of this sort of thing.

Two Sundays running Archdeacon Donaldson occupied the pulpit. On the first occasion he spoke of the religion of Christ as not only concerned with the private virtues, but with political righteousness. And, taking as his subject Christ's story of the Judgment of the Nations, explained Him as teaching that nations are to be judged, not by their questionable possessions of mighty empires, but by "the condition of their common people, their housing, or lack of it, their clothing or nakedness, their feeding or starvation, their sickness or their health, their freedom or their servitude."

Upon the nations who have neglected these things, or failed to oppose the system which breeds misery, will be pronounced the judgment "Depart from me, ye accursed, into eternal fire. Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these, ye did it not unto me."

In his next sermon the Archdeacon again insisted that Christ was concerned with world politics. He condemned the Church's refusal to interfere with politics, or to care for anything but philanthropy and the individual soul. It was abominable that "in our present period of plenty, millions of people are stunted in the amenities of life. Nations enormously rich do not feed, clothe and house adequately millions of their citizens. Vast areas of poverty exist side by side with great affluence and luxury." Christians must beware of pronouncing our own nation wholly right, and the nation which we are fighting wholly wrong. It is not for Christians "to stimulate the war feeling and fever; and to out-general the generals of the Army in their zeal for arms."

These sermons could hardly have drawn from the Lady of Cadogan Square the words: "Now I feel a little better. What a treat to hear Thy Word."

CONRAD NOEL

The Vicarage, Thaxted.

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PETER DAVIES

WAR AIMS

SIR,—Mr. Wilfred Wellock's long descriptions of the possible course of world events require, if they are to be effective, a simple answer to two questions: "What are the maximum offers that you will make to Germany for peace?" and, "If they are refused, what then?" The alleged "reluctance of responsible people to face the grim realities of the present situation" does not exist. "Responsible people" are keeping quiet because, with other things, they do not know the answers to the above questions. A brief statement would provide the point which, so far, is lacking in Mr. Wellock's diagnoses.

M. W. MURRAY

SIR,—

> An Elderly Statesman with gout,
> When asked what the war was about,
> In a written reply
> Said, "My colleagues and I
> Are doing our best to find out."

13 Old Queen Street, Westminster, London, S.W.1.

WILLIAM DOUGLAS HOME

CRIMINAL JUSTICE BILL

SIR,—Criminal justice is what Parliament, the judges, the magistrates, the officials and the public, including the criminals, make it. A year ago Parliament accepted the view of the Home Office and the public that the time had come to overhaul the legislative framework. It has now abandoned the Criminal Justice Bill in deference to the view of the Home Office that the officials are too busy to shepherd it through the House of Lords.

The general regret may be tempered by the reflection that the Government proposed to shelve the flogging clause as "controversial" even if it had proceeded with the Bill. That would have been a high price to pay by those who find Britain's refusal to give up corporal punishment a stumbling block to reform in other countries. As it is we must now work for a root and branch Bill, for a Parliament which will abolish hanging and flogging as well as provide Observation Centres, hostels and psychological treatment.

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Meantime, all who have lamented the loss of the Bill can help to secure the maximum reform by administration and voluntary effort. The courts are not bound to do all the wrong that the law allows; for apart from the death penalty for murder, that same law gives to English judges and magistrates almost unlimited powers of mercy. Probation, with its infinite elasticity, Probation Hostels, the Child Guidance Clinics, the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency, experiments like Q Camps, all offer opportunities of dealing constructively with law-breakers.

Governors of back of beyond prisons have often envied the "show prisons" of Wormwood Scrubs and Wakefield their chance of initiating reforms. Prison disturbances consequent on evacuation may lead us to ask what can be done to extend such things as prison visiting and teaching and earnings schemes in some provincial prisons where London men on transfer have found a lowering of standards and a loss of legitimate activity and opportunity for responsibility. The Prison Commissioners started Wakefield prison camp without the help of Parliament. We want more Wakefields and fewer Wandsworths.

The Howard League for Penal Reform.
89 Attimore Road,
Welwyn Garden City, Herts.

CICELY M. CRAVEN,
Honorary Secretary.

REPRESSION IN FRANCE

SIR,—On Monday, November 20th, the *Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* reported a decree issued in France the day before to the effect that Prefects may fix a place of residence for "persons dangerous to national defence or public safety," and that such persons may be put to work on the national defences. The execution of this decree, which the *Daily Telegraph* reports under the headline "French measures to end Communism," is to be in the hands of the military authorities.

So now we have on the territory of our ally, France, concentration camps and forced labour, under military control, for Communists and, one may divine, for others who venture to protest against the wartime conditions of labour which are being imposed on the French workers. This development follows the suppression of the Communist Party, the imprisonment of 39 deputies, the dissolution of some 300 local councils (measures involving the disfranchisement of some two million electors), the abolition of shop stewards, compulsory overtime at reduced rates of pay, and the forcible appropriation by the State of a percentage of the workers' wages.

It is significant that these measures of repression are directed not merely against political supporters of the Communist anti-war policy, but also at those who organise the economic defence of the working-class standard of living.

How can democrats in this country, and especially those whose main interest is in the improvement of working-class standards, look on without alarm at this increasing approximation in an allied country to those methods of government and economic organisation which we are supposed to be fighting against? The leaders of the C.G.T. and of the French Socialist Party apparently give their full support to their government's actions. Will their opposite numbers in this country make any protest to them? If not, doubt must spread among their own rank and file as to whether either our own Government or our Labour leaders aref really concerned for the defence of democracy and resistance to the spread of Fascist methods. TWO HOLBORN COUNCILLORS

WAR SAVINGS CAMPAIGN

SIR,—I find it most difficult to obtain answers to the following questions:

1. The State is advertising in the press and on hoardings with the object of encouraging saving. Side by side, in the press and on hoardings, may be found advertising to encourage spending. To which should we pay most heed?

2. If saving is of the utmost urgency, why does the State permit advertising which encourages spending?

3. Alternatively, why does the State support propaganda against itself by allowing trade advertising as an expense which may be deducted from profits subject to tax? At present it may be said that the State contributes in this way over a third of the cost of trade advertising for the Standard rate of Income Tax is 7s. in the £.

4. Is it "patriotic" to save when to do so must drive my friends, my neighbours and myself into bankruptcy?

28 Great Castle Street,
Oxford Circus, W.1.

L. MUNDY

THE ARTIST AND THE PUBLIC

SIR,—When, on page 28 of his pamphlet, Mr. Graham Bell wrote: "Scientific Socialists are aware of the problem when they struggle to find a formula by which individual choice . . . can be practised in spite of the needs of a state capitalism which has to sell its products"; I imagined that he was associating himself with these thoughtful people. Of course, I accept his disavowal; and assume that he is an unscientific Socialist. For the rest, may I support his plea that such of your readers as are interested in the matter should read his pamphlet and see whether they can make more sense of it than I could?

Charleston, Firle, Lewes. CLIVE BELL

PLUS ÇA CHANGE

Sir,—I am always moved by the discovery that better men than myself have in earlier times been faced with a situation similar to my own, and that their reaction was much the same. There is, too, an obscure but real satisfaction, perhaps better say "amusement," in the repetition of history. Your readers might care to hear what Francis, later Lord, Jeffrey wrote to his friend Horner in June, 1815:

> I am mortally afraid of the war, and I think that is all I can say about it. I hate Bonaparte, too, because he makes me more afraid than anybody else; and seems more immediately the cause of my paying income-tax, and having my friends killed by dysentery and gun-shot wounds, and making my country unpopular, bragging, servile, and everything that I do not wish it to be. I do think, too, that the risk was, and is, far more imminent and tremendous of the subversion of all national independence, and all peaceful virtues, and mild and generous habits, by his insolent triumph, than by the success of the most absurd of those who are allied against him! (Cockburn's *Life of Lord Jeffrey*, 1852, Vol. I, p. 234.)

This may at least interest the editors, if not a wider audience.

Oxford. W. DENHAM SUTCLIFFE

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CHILDREN'S

A general favourite is *Ben*, the life of a cart-horse, by Primrose Cumming, with 66 photographs (5*s.*). Noel Streatfeild's *Dennis the Dragon* (3*s.* 6*d.*) is witty and original. Carola Oman's *Alfred, King of the English* (6*s.*), is a grand historical tale.

DENT

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LEWIS CARROLL

The Complete Works of Lewis Carroll, with an introduction by ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT. *Nonesuch Press.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

The complete works of Lewis Carroll have been issued by the *Nonesuch Press* in a stout volume of 1,293 pages. So there is no excuse—Lewis Carroll ought once and for all to be complete. We ought to be able to grasp him whole and entire. But we fail—once more we fail. We think we have caught Lewis Carroll; we look again and see an Oxford clergyman. We think we have caught the Rev. C. L. Dodgson—we look again and see a fairy elf. The book breaks in two in our hands. In order to cement it, we turn to the Life.

But the Rev. C. L. Dodgson had no life. He passed through the world so lightly that he left no print. He melted so passively into Oxford that he is invisible. He accepted every convention; he was prudish, pernickety, pious, and jocose. If Oxford dons in the nineteenth century had an essence he was that essence. He was so good that his sisters worshipped him; so pure that his nephew has nothing to say about him. It is just possible, he hints, that "a shadow of disappointment lay over Lewis Carroll's life." Mr. Dodgson at once denies the shadow. "My life," he says, "is free from all trial and trouble." But this untinted jelly contained within it a perfectly hard crystal. It contained childhood. And this is very strange, for childhood normally fades slowly. Wisps of childhood persist when the boy or girl is a grown man or woman. Childhood returns sometimes by day, more often by night. But it was not so with Lewis Carroll. For some reason, we know not what, his childhood was sharply severed. It lodged in him whole and entire. He could not disperse it. And therefore as he grew older this impediment in the centre of his being, this hard block of pure childhood, starved the mature man of nourishment. He slipped through the grown-up world like a shadow, solidifying only on the beach at Eastbourne, with little girls whose frocks he pinned up with safety pins. But since childhood remained in him entire, he could do what no one else has ever been able to do—he could return to that world; he could re-create it, so that we too become children again.

In order to make us into children, he first makes us asleep. "Down, down, down, would the fall *never* come to an end?" Down, down, down we fall into that terrifying, wildly inconsequent, yet perfectly logical world where time races, then stands still; where space stretches, then contracts. It is the world of sleep; it is also the world of dreams. Without any conscious effort dreams come; the white rabbit, the walrus and the carpenter, one after another, turning and changing one into the other, they come skipping and leaping across the mind. It is for this reason that the two Alices are not books for children; they are the only books in which we become children. President Wilson, Queen Victoria, the *Times* leader writer, the late Lord Salisbury—it does not matter how old, how important or how insignificant you are, you become a child again. To become a child is to be very literal; to find everything so strange that nothing is surprising; to be heartless, to be ruthless, yet to be so passionate that a snub or a shadow drapes the world in gloom. It is to be Alice in Wonderland.

It is also to be Alice Through the Looking Glass. It is to see the world upside down. Many great satirists and moralists have shown us the world upside down, and have made us see it; as grown-up people see it, savagely. Only Lewis Carroll has shown us the world upside down, as a child sees it, and has made us laugh as children laugh, irresponsibly. Down the groves of pure nonsense we whirl laughing, laughing—

> They sought it with thimbles, they sought it with care
> They pursued it with forks and with hope . . .

And then we wake. None of the transitions in Alice in Wonderland is quite so queer. For we wake to find—is it the Rev. C. L. Dodgson? Is it Lewis Carroll? Or is it both combined? This conglomerate object intends to produce an extra-Bowdlerised edition of Shakespeare for the use of British maidens; implores them to think of death when they go to the play; and always, always to realise that "the true object of life is the development of *character*. . . ." Is there, then, even in 1,293 pages, any such thing as "completeness"?

VIRGINIA WOOLF

GEMS

The Knapsack. Edited by HERBERT READ. *Routledge.* 6*s.*
Courage. Edited by HUGH KINGSMILL. *Bles.* 8*s.* 6*d.*
The English Vision. Edited by HERBERT READ. *Routledge.* 3*s.* 6*d.*
The Christmas Companion. Edited by JOHN HADFIELD. *Dent.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
The Best Poems of 1939. Edited by THOMAS MOULT. *Cape.* 6*s.*
A Book of Modern Verse. *Chatto and Windus.* 1*s.*
The Bedside Book. Edited by ARTHUR STANLEY. *Gollancz.* 3*s.* 6*d.*
English Galaxy of Shorter Poems. Edited by GERALD BULLETT. *Dent.* 2*s.*

The Knapsack, an anthology edited by Mr. Herbert Read for those on active service, has the practical advantages which his experience as a serving soldier in the last war has suggested. Appearance has been entirely sacrificed to utility; the "serviceable" binding in a drab chocolate is no doubt very durable and, clipping, as it does, over the exposed edge, should stand up to hard usage. Its length is in inverse ratio to its bulk; it would slip easily into the pocket and yet it has six hundred odd pages. The poetry, though mostly familiar, is catholic in taste and includes a section of nonsense verse. The prose, which comprises two-thirds of the book, is given in bulk, not snippets, and is far from escapist. This is as it should be; the long hours of boredom and inactivity of a modern war demand something which can stretch and exercise the mind as well as delight it, and the philosophical section, which includes extracts from Plato, Spinoza, Lao Tse, and Blake, answers that purpose. It is with the 200 pages devoted to accounts of other wars, battles, fighters and dyings that I should quarrel—pages which the editor justifies by the assertion that "the love of glory, even in our materialistic age, is still the main source of virtue. The real good is not done by calculation, or defined by reason. It is an act of courage or of grace." It may be so; but the sole book which one may be able to carry should consist only of things one wants to read over and over; and that hardly applies to descriptions, however vivid, of the last war. They may be interesting, as "shop" is always interesting to those who are sharing an activity; but this is not Mr. Read's idea. It seems to me a doubtful proposition that reading of courage will induce it, any more than, say, compulsory football will do so; on the contrary, if it gives the brave an exercise, it usually serves to confirm the timidity of the timid. That view is furthered by reading Mr. Kingsmill's anthology, *Courage*. When I came across Mr. Winthrop Young's horrifyingly well-told episode of an ascent up the Taeschorn, my own terror of mountains was reinforced a hundredfold, although I admire more than ever (from my armchair) that most disinterested form of courage which climbers exhibit. Such exhortation is certainly more suitable for those who are not actually facing the danger.

What is remarkable about current anthologies is the change of taste for the better which they show to have taken place recently. False romanticism has been debunked and a new realism allows a more robust set of originals to be drawn on. One knows, for instance, the kind of anthology which ten years ago an aunt

would have thought a suitable Christmas present for a boy. All dash and daring with the blood left out. Mr. Kingsmill keeps in the blood and worse things besides, but he redresses the balance by putting acts of moral courage on a par with physical, equating a speech by Cobbett with Nelson losing an arm. So, too, Mr. Herbert Read's other anthology, *The English Vision*, is much more virile than this sort of thing used to be in the days when the Shropshire landscape, cricket, Cockney humour and Baldwinian freedom made up the English character. Here the English landscape is evoked by D. H. Lawrence, our native genius is exemplified not in games but in our approach to the arts as our greatest critics have seen it, while the defence of our liberties is entrusted to Milton and the great nineteenth-century historians. Some of this, with its real understanding of the English spirit at its best, might with advantage have been included in *The Knapsack*.

And so to the Home Front. *The Christmas Companion* is distinguished by its editor's nice taste in verse. The Nativity, which, with its double theme of babyhood and royalty, offered terrible pitfalls—tank-traps almost—to the refined deference of the nineteenth-century poet and hymn-writer, was a perfect subject for the more earthy, witty and familiar ingenuity of the sixteenth and seventeenth; and Mr. Hadfield has selected well. Apart from this, the Companion supplies everything a Christmas party could want: ghost stories; instruction in the appropriate cooking, decoration and theology; a collection of carols with music; and a fiendish collection of Caliban puzzles, crosswords and general knowledge tests. Personally, if landed in a party which possessed the Companion, I should hide it in my bedroom. Then I could enjoy the poems at night and prevent anyone else getting hold of a book which is guaranteed to keep the party "festive and seasonable" for the whole of the twelve days.

The Best Poems of 1939 would do as a present for relations whose taste in verse stopped before Eliot came in. Most of the "modern" poets are there—Dylan Thomas, W. H. Auden, Charles Madge, Day Lewis; but they are either swamped with poems which begin like this:

> When God made man to live and breathe
> He set him in a garden sweet. . . .

or they are smoothed over with dinky little illustrations—below Dylan Thomas, an Olde Lanthorne, beneath Auden on Yeats, a squirrel with the darlingest bushy big tail. The Zodiac *Book of Modern Verse* would, from its pleasing format and reasonable price, make a charming reminder—poems from Yeats to Prokosch, well selected up to Eliot, after which it rather breaks down. Finally, two reprints, the agreeable, diverting and diverse *Bedside Book*, a remarkable bargain at the price, and Gerald Bullett's admirable *English Galaxy of Shorter Poems*, now issued in the Everyman Library.

T. C. WORSLEY

NEW BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Sebastian Bach, the Boy from Thuringia. Mozart, the Wonder Boy. Joseph Haydn, the Merry Little Peasant. By OPAL WHEELER and SYBIL DEUCHER. *Faber*. 6s. each.

A Child's Book of Carols. Stories for Christmas. Modern Verse for Young People. *Oxford University Press*. 1s. 6d. each.

Grannie Gray. By ELEANOR FARJEON. *Dent*. 3s. 6d.

A Treasure Book of Stories for Children. Collected by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER. *Harrap*. 7s. 6d.

Heroes and Wizards. Stories retold by GRACE COBURN. *Nelson*. 3s. 6d.

While the Story-Log Burns. By THORNTON W. BURGESS. *John Lane*. 6s.

Mimff. By H. J. KAESER. Illustrated by Edward Ardizzone *Oxford Press*. 6s.

MY DEAR H.,

I promised to let you know if any new children's books came my way before Christmas, so here are some notes on the ones THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION has sent me for review. At first sight they seemed rather a disappointing pile—no Babar, no Lucy Brown or Little Tim, no Mumfi, no Mary Poppins—a general impression of lack of dash, colour and excitement about the covers and titles. And, unfortunately, I haven't been able to try them out on the children this year, Hugo being away at school and Sally having, as she says, temporarily "gone off" everything except comics and a French-English grammar; so that I find myself in the usual conscientious predicament about what will or won't be popular, what might bore, alarm or appear in some way suspect. There's no doubt children's tastes have changed tremendously in the last thirty years. Aeroplanes and racing cars have radically altered the symbols for power and adventure. Cissy is the current term for the moral literature I myself preferred. The words good and bad have been caused to lose some of their potency. I believe the field of imagination is thereby narrowed, but possibly this makes for wholesomeness. Can you imagine your daughters wishfully identifying themselves, as we did, with *Les Petites Filles Modèles*? Another passion of ours, Hans Andersen, has always made my two uneasy; and now that I read him more objectively he does seem to me at times unbearably morbid and sickly. I rather think of the older authors, only E. Nesbit and Beatrix Potter, those inimitable geniuses, will weather all fluctuations and stand immortal.

Then there is the problem of age-groups. Both your children and mine have read from six onwards books we read from nine on. Are children generally speaking older for their age than they were? I rather believe so. More than one book placed in Hugo's hands at the correct age according to the wrapper has been as contemptuously discarded as tich stuff, or infantile.

Now as to these books: *Sebastian Bach*, *Mozart* and *Joseph Haydn* are lives of the composers written for children. They are delightfully bound and printed, and Mary Greenwalt's pictures are not only brilliant as drawings, but really illustrate, amuse and instruct. The text is extremely simple—I think almost oversimplified: it reads in rather a primer-ish disjointed surface way, as if written for the very young; and I wish there were a few dates. Surely children should be given at least a bare clue of the century by which to relate these lives and the development of music to other historical events. For instance we are told Haydn came to England and played before the Royal Family, but we aren't told which. Each life is presented in a light so limpid and idealistic it seems almost mythical. Each step towards fame seems as effortless as breathing, and the apotheosis, under princely patronage, like the end of a fairy story. What is new and admirable about the text is the way pages of simple music are interpolated at appropriate intervals, so that the music itself is at every stage directly related to the musician and stressed as the real point of the story. A combination of reading aloud and playing the melodies from these books would be a delightful way of starting the musical education of a young school-class.

A Child's Book of Carols, *Stories for Christmas* and *Modern Verse for Young People* are three new volumes of an attractive cheap series called the Chameleon books. They are prettily bound and decorated. If one could say "artistic" or "gay" without sounding derogatory one might call them that. The standard of the modern verse is high; there is no rant or cant. The specimens of nature poetry seem to me enchanting; and there are some good songs and ballads—a few on the patriotic-hearty side, but not disagreeably so. The carols are a representative collection with tunes, *Stories for Christmas* includes a Hans Andersen, *The Night Before Christmas*, most light-hearted and imaginative Santa Claus poem ever written (do you remember who wrote it?), and a lovely Christ legend by Tolstoy. These would make good extra little presents for your Christmas tree, or to slip into a big envelope if you wished to go one better than a Christmas card. Age: about twelve, when small personal libraries begin to be valued.

Grannie Gray is an attractively produced collection of short plays and singing games for children. They are good on the whole, original and full of vitality, though the plays are a shade too sprightly and punning for my taste. However, children like puns. One of the plays, *Mother Hutch*, is a very odd work with a pre-Elizabethan flavour. Mrs. Farjeon's dialogue goes at such a rattling pace one feels a bit breathless and giddy at the end; but I have an inhibition or am merely stupid about reading plays and never can judge them properly or visualise them on the stage. I would like to see some of these tried out. A new semi-rhyming version of *Snow White* is fresh and charming.

The material in *A Treasure Box of Stories* is good, catholic and unbanal, and any child from about seven on would find something to enjoy. But the illustrations are deplorable, in the debased, Christmas Annual style. A chapter from *Five Children and It* is included, and the Psammead, our loved disagreeable Psammead, most aristocratic and archaic of creatures, is pictured as a vulgar sort of hairy monster with coarse human hands and feet and a criminal ape-man head. Can you credit it?

Heroes and Wizards is in a different and a higher class. It is a collection of little-known folk stories gathered from sources

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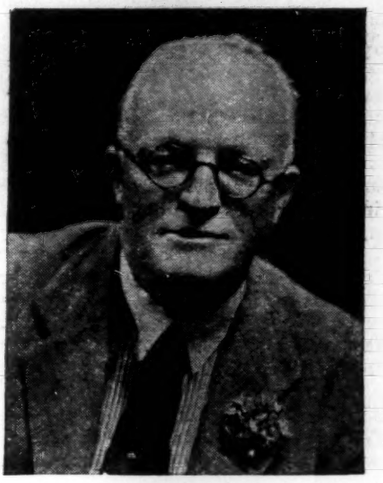

HUGH WALPOLE

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—*Hugh Walpole (Daily Sketch).*

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By OSBERT SITWELL **12/6**

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"A colourful and unconventional story. The scene is laid in Dalmatia, and the descriptions of scenery and the local characters exude all the refreshment and exhilaration of a foreign holiday."—*John o' London's Weekly.*

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"The most vivid and quaintest picture of life at an English seaside town and a watering-place in France as one small boy found it during those now almost fabulous years before the Great War."—*Ralph Straus (Sunday Times).*

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"A masterpiece. . . . Artistically this biographical conversation piece is perfection. . . . A wonderful and delightful book."—*Keith G. Feiling (The Observer).* A second large printing has been called for and is now ready.

By DOROTHY MARGARET STUART *Illustrated* **15/-**

from Macmillan's Christmas List

all over the world. They have an extraordinary purity, and give the feeling of being very close to primitive springs of ritual and magic. Miss Coburn is obviously a true scholar with an imaginative sense of her subject. It seems to me the African stories are the most beautiful and poetic. The wrapper says eleven to sixteen, but I think much younger and much older people would appreciate the stories. The illustrations are uninspired.

While the Story-Log Burns is by an American writer, and is a delightfully produced book of animal stories. The coloured plates of birds and beasts by Lemuel Palmer are the work of a first-class artist and natural historian. I like the questions and answers chapters better than the stories themselves. The Story Teller and the Old Naturalist seem rather sentimental figures: it is partly the capital letters; and I find the bogus anthropomorphism of such terms as Old Mother Nature, Jolly Little Sunbeams, Merry Little Breezes distasteful. This attitude establishes a false relationship with the animal world and makes one suspect the information, which is a pity, for Mr. Burgess is an excellent naturalist. I don't really like books with a sane and kindly philosophy towards our furred and feathered friends. Animals should either be written about as animals or else as Beatrix Potter does: that is, on equal terms with humans, wearing gloves and bonnets, boots and jackets, owning cradles and dusters, getting hurt in their dignity, gratified in their vanity: a world of fussy, busy householders, seen, with their foibles and their prejudices and their cosy little homes, under a light so exquisitely innocent, naïve and sympathetic they become magical figures and live for ever. "Who loves animals must also love his fellowman," says Mr. Burgess: a demonstrably untrue statement. One has only to read reports of annual meetings of the R.S.P.C.A. All the same, there is much that is fascinating in this book, particularly (to me) the account of the great birth-and-death voyages of eels, a subject which never fails to move me. Did you know that the horn of the rhinoceros is made of matted hair, not tooth stuff?

No Lucy Brown I said, but there is a children's novel, *Mimff*, illustrated by Edward Ardizzone, and a real prize packet it is in every way. It comes from Sweden and is admirably translated by Kathleen Williamson. Mimff is the eight-year-old hero, and he's an adorable guy, good-tempered, generous, lively and innocent. The point of his character is that he is unable to feel fear, and this should cause most children of roughly the same age to identify themselves with him or turn him into a dream-release. The book is concerned with the epic exploits of a journey he undertook to see if he could find out what it felt like to be afraid. The matter of factness, the realistic way with fantasy is impeccable, and exactly what children most appreciate. Mr. Kaeser adopts the same psychological principle as Messrs. Auden and Isherwood of making the mother-figure await the hero to get him down at the end of his road; but, believe it or not, this is put over with the minimum of embarrassment and doesn't appear sinister. After all it is exactly like a hero to be impervious until a crack in the home front weakens him, threatening change he can't take action to control. However, I can see one of your children and one of mine turning this page in a bit of a hurry. Edward Ardizzone's illustrations are as glowing, humorous and idiosyncratic as ever; his noses and feet have a life of their own. He is a ravishing comic artist.

Well, that's the lot. I promised to advise you if ever a sequel to *Johnny and Marytary* appeared: but this year still no luck. If only Mr. Cresswell could be reached and persuaded! I suppose I've had to read it aloud twenty-five times and it still makes me laugh and causes Sal to go into a trance.

I hope you'll manage to bear up over the season. I can't remember that the last war interfered much with our enjoyment of it, and doubtless our successors won't notice the difference this time either: at least, not this year. One more old-fashioned Christmas for unbombed English children. Who'd have thought it?

ROSAMOND LEHMANN

OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES

Poets of To-Morrow. FIRST SELECTION. PETER HEWETT, H. B. MALLALIEU, RUTHVEN TODD, ROBERT WALLER. *Hogarth.* 6s.
Poems by Christopher Caudwell. *Lane.* 6s.
The Spirit Watches. By RUTH PITTER. *Cresset Press.* 3s. 6d.
Collected Poems of Robert Frost. *Longmans.* 21s.

No writer can begin to tackle the problems of his work until he has found out what he really wants to write about. Writers usually pass through stages, in which they are occupied in shedding off layers of snobbery. Adolescent snobbery about the importance of violent and tragic emotions, followed by various literary fashions, and finally—the most difficult of all—the prevailing snobbery of the time which pretends to be "reality" as every contemporary must see it, if he is not to be labelled an escapist.

The Georgian poets had a snobbery about the countryside which to-day is labelled escapist, but to them was real. The city din, the pavement gray, were unreal, the real was the sound of lake waters. To-day, the problems and menaces of our time are what seem real: everything else is an evasion. Open an anthology of Georgian poetry; it is all about cows and fields and flowers and trees and hedges. Open *Poets of To-morrow*, and it is all about houses and frontiers and aeroplanes and Spain and firing squads, and, to quote Mr. Hewett, "bright soviets in the dusty land."

Considered as a genre, it must be admitted that the Georgian poetry is less boring than the Left-wing orthodox poetry, because nature is more interesting as a topic of literary conversation than is the machinery of destruction. Yet each school produces a genuine vein of its own, and the task of the critic is to discover this pure vein and separate it from the dross. Robert Frost's poetry, for example, is nature poetry of real genuineness; it is by an American better than any of his English contemporaries who wrote of the same subjects. Edward Thomas is the only poet who has accepted his influence and actually added something to Frost. Frost is a writer at the very centre of his subject, with no pose or trills and graces, writing with a flat control about the life he enjoys which is not contrasted with any other kind of life, so that the question of "escape" does not arise. At times he fades off into sheer dullness, but at other times his monotonous, almost monosyllabic, pedestrian, materialistic poetry is organised with such mastery and is so little anxious to make claims of a spiritual or lyric nature outside its own world that it achieves the ecstasy of plain things—moonlit apples, a cottage loaf, a scrubbed kitchen table.

Christopher Caudwell might have written poetry as genuine as Frost's. No one can read his poems without feeling that this world of proletarian revolution, war, the materialist view of history is really his world, and commands his whole interest. Unfortunately, there are only half a dozen poems here in which he seems to have resolved complex literary influences, and really found his own voice:

> And you will hear a crash of falling glass
> And find me (sawdust welling from the wound)
> Stabbed through the bosom by the dirty truth.
>
> Outside the nightingales (bemoaning me)
> Tear their brown breasts; and the June roses moult.
> Open the window and throw down a coin.

The same assurance cannot be found in the orthodoxy of Mr. Hewett, Mr. Mallalieu and Mr. Todd. Mr. Hewett is surely a pastoral poet, whose best work is like early Blunden:

> the thatch was mossy and the well was rust
> the hollow hogweed grew beside the barn

but against this pleasant, drowsy picture there is imposed, without more than the most theoretical integration, a view of war, revolution, etc., expressed with a poet's naïf confidence, but without a poet's organising vision, so that it arouses little but apprehension in the reader:

> how hate will triumph, brother love will win,
> and found bright soviets in the dusty land

Mr. Mallalieu is less naïf, more given to abstraction, less concrete, vaguer but more organic and intelligent in his grasp of what he is writing about than Mr. Hewett. I have seen an unpublished poetic drama of his which contains better lines than any here. Perhaps, indeed, the poetry of violence and dialectic is more interesting in a play than in lyrics.

With Mr. Todd, we come to someone far maturer. His poetry is clumsy, unexciting, but genuine. He knows what he cares about, and if Spain and China come into his poetry, it does not instantly lose all proportion, as though the poet were paying a vague obeisance to something far greater than anything he knows about. His curious legends about country gods have a four-square, wooden, peasant solidity, as memorable as his observation at times:

> In the hard rain and the rip of thunder,
> I remembered the haze coming in from the sea
> And the clatter of Gaelic voices by the breakwater
> Or in the fields as the reapers took their tea.

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Mr. Waller is the most exciting of these four poets, in a volume which should certainly be bought, even if it rather disappoints. He writes under the influence of a powerful emotion, which really communicates itself to the reader, and many of his lines are memorable:

> How bright you, dearest, were;
> Somewhere a store of light was coiled in you.
> I kissed and lit a city up seen from the air.
> Each other's lips were shelters from the cold
> And gladly at all hours we warmly rested there.

These and the lines following are very beautiful, and that is a lot to be thankful for. Mr. Waller has a mind that thinks in vivid images and feels strongly. He has little sense of form, or delight in words. That is what he has to contend with.

Miss Pitter's poems are admired by Belloc, Beachcomber, James Stephens (who compares them to Yeats), Siegfried Sassoon, and Robert Nichols. She is a Hawthornden prizewinner. But, as Natasha says in Mr. Isherwood's *Landauers*, "I am very sorry. I cannot help you." I consider them a fake. Her music, her imagery, her observation, have a mistiness as of the gauze let down in front of the stage before the scene in *The Immortal Hour*, but I find myself resisting this woof:

> What fearful thing is she, that sees
> Joy failing, and the gaping grave,
> That knows our bitter mysteries,
> Our death, our life of little ease,
> The coward's hell, the anguish of the brave.

One has an uplifting sense of someone thinking beautiful things, but nothing is focused either in the Here or the Hereafter.

STEPHEN SPENDER

THE VICEROY OF CIPANGO

Christopher Columbus. By SALVADOR DE MADARIAGA. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 21s.

On October 11th, 1492, three sea-weary ships arrived at Watling Island in the Lucayas after a nine weeks' voyage from the Spanish port of Palos. For us, Columbus had discovered America, though for himself and his contemporaries, Cristobal Colon had reached the fringe of Cathay. Señor de Madariaga furnishes a monumental guide to the geographical cross-purposes and half-truths which conjured an unknown continent from an unknown ocean. Excepting the invention of a speaking part for a mystic voice heard in crises by his hero, there is no indulgence of the *vie romancée* in the spacious movement of his narrative. The egg is not mentioned. Instead, much of his task has been to weed out his predecessors' fictions, of which several were waiting at the start.

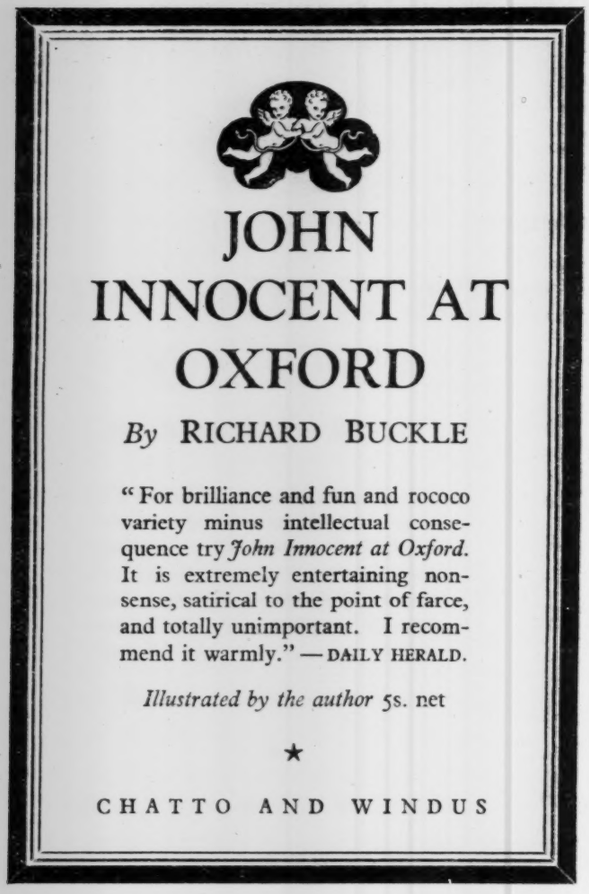
To provide Columbus with the beginnings that he kept a mystery has tempted zealous nationalist biographers to confront Christofero Colombo, the Genoese weaver's son, with shadowy natives of Spain and Portugal as claimants to become the discoverer. For how, with Tichborne-Orton ambiguity, could he get washed ashore in Portugal, from a French corsair fighting Genoese vessels, as Cristobal Colon, who moreover wrote and spoke Spanish, and not Italian? Senor de Madariaga adopts the explanation that the Colombo family were Conversos, or Spanish Jews converted to catholicism.

Though not a fact that can be proved, the theory fits. The Colombos would follow tradition in keeping the Spanish language, with the Genoese dialect for common use. Their sea-roving son, with no deep pride of country, would fight under and against any flag, reverting in the western peninsula to an original family name of Colon, for which Colombo was a natural Italian form. Further, this conception of a Jewish Columbus is in some degree confirmed by the behaviour of the heimatos Colon. He tried to stir Ferdinand and Isabella to a crusade, with a union of Christians and Jews behind the scheme, while in the account of his first expedition he reminded them, quite irrelevantly and almost defiantly, that he sailed in the month of their Jewish expulsion. His chief Spanish supporters and his mistress were Conversos; and from such personal traits as keen bargaining, lack of nationalist ardour, obsession with gold and precious stones, and tendency to prophetic utterance, Señor de Madariaga mortars the case. Unfortunately its development clogs the first quarter of the book, which does not take on its grand sweep till Colon appears in Portugal.

It was probably there, amid a general fever of exploring, that he first evolved the project of a westward route to Asia, as a company-promoter takes advantage of a boom. But John II had already turned down a kindred plan, sketched out by a Florentine mathematician, so that after wasting six years in a land of practical seamen, Colon crossed the frontier to seek backers in Castille. Then followed eight years of groping through a maze of grandees and bishops to Ferdinand and Isabella before a suspect fanatic, equipped with a Florentine's draft-map stolen from the royal library in Lisbon, emerged as Admiral of Castille and Viceroy "of all the islands and mainland to be discovered." The monarchs provided him with a passport to the Grand Khan and his three little caravels put to sea.

Hero-worship is justified in the excellent chapter describing the first voyage, for there is no smirch on Colon's greatness as a navigator. The management of his fleet, in an uncanny grasp of wind and current, and perhaps most in keeping his men sailing on, remains a feat undimmed by time's perspective. That America cropped up instead of Asia does not lessen it. A scientific geographer of the Renaissance, who shared half a century with Leonardo da Vinci, though Colon cowed a host of savages by his ability to calculate an eclipse, he relied on data from the Book of Esdras and from Mandeville. Under pain of fines and lashes he made the crews of his second expedition swear that Cuba was a mainland, Hayti serving as Cipango, the queen-island of the eastern Indies; and on his third voyage he decided that the world was not a sphere, but pear-shaped. What was actual in his achievement was the more a conquest for being against his knowledge.

But to the Admiral's epic is opposed the Viceroy's tragedy, a crescendo of blunders in empire-building. Powers allotted to his own family, slaughters of natives, importation of convict colonists and exportation of slaves, all led to harshly repressed, revolts and an anti-Colon party in Spain as well as in the settlements. It had the guarded sanction of Ferdinand and Isabella, for though they preserved gratitude and a liking for the discoverer, his faults threatened to turn the new world with which he had endowed them into a vast white elephant. The commissioner they sent out to investigate could never have been meant to ship Colon back to Spain in irons, and it was he who insisted on landing in them, with the same eye to effect that had made him return from his second voyage, after his rule had been challenged, in a Franciscan's robe of poverty. It was a way of making the monarchs feel uncomfortable. Señor de Madariaga's defence of their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attitude, with its evidence of their qualms as to slavery, is an important rehabilitation.

Colon won permission for a fourth voyage. As though at last conscious that the real East lay beyond his dubious Cipangos and sites of Paradise, he hoped for another ocean on the far side of his discoveries. He returned disappointed, and died eighteen months later, in 1506, vainly striving to get his family reinstated as rulers of the settlements. He had signed his will with something very like a cabbalistic symbol, thus also leaving a final mystery to his biographers. The present one has performed his office with a fine thoroughness, only marred by so many of the hundred pages of notes being left untranslated in Spanish. T. W. EARP

PRETTY PICTURES

The Local. Lithographs by EDWARD ARDIZZONE. Text by MAURICE GORHAM. *Cassell.* 7s. 6d.

Brighton Aquatints. By JOHN PIPER. *Duckworth.* 21s. (hand coloured, £6 6s.).

Five Centuries of Ballet Design. By CYRIL W. BEAUMONT. *Studio.* 7s. 6d.

India and China. A photographic study by ALFRED NAWRATH. *Cresset Press.* 25s

Rodin. *Allen and Unwin.* 10s. 6d.

Painting in England: Hogarth to Whistler. By MARY CHAMOT. *Country Life.* 10s. 6d.

Scandinavian Peasant Costume. By KATHLEEN PRIMMER. *Black.* 12s. 6d.

The Queen's Book of the Red Cross. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 5s.

Letters to Young Shooters. By UNCLE RALPH. Illustrated by MAURICE TULLOCH. *Rich and Cowan.* 10s. 6d.

First prize, *The Local*. Edward Ardizzone is, of course, the modern Rowlandson, but a Rowlandson who has looked at Constantin Guys, Daumier, Lautrec and even, I suspect, Bonnard. The lithographs in this book show his command of colour, though blue, red and yellow are the only colours, with black, that are used. The sturdy Victorian atmosphere that persists in pubs is here caught perfectly, the barrels as pot-bellied as bookies, the boisterous mahogany, the bosomy, golden-haired barmaids, the bowler-hatted regulars, the dart-boards that look like breast-plates. With contagious gusto Ardizzone portrays a series of pubs and pub-types, while Mr. Maurice Gorham compresses in excellent prose a specialised knowledge that must have cost ten thousand "finals" and "binders." Often his information is most curious: we hear of pubs where the customers are all in the dance-music business, or the rag trade, of pubs where bandsmen come after concerts to change their regimentals for civilian attire, of pubs where couriers exchange their cosmopolitan Cockney. ("Wotcher, Bert. Where you been keepin' yerself? 'Aven't seen you since gawd knows when. Lemme see—Niples, wasn't it, last June—or 'Eliopolis?") His protests against the redecoration and rebuilding of pubs are particularly welcome. Streamlined chromium-plate does not encourage one to drink bitter or Guinness, and its use in pubs is therefore excessively unfunctional. *The Local* is a book that distils so powerfully the beauties of pub-life that even Lady Astor (I hope) could not resist it.

Second prize, *Brighton Aquatints*; and if Mr. Piper does not share the first prize, it is because his book has not quite so wide an appeal. But the architectural charms of Brighton are here rendered with extraordinary tact and imagination, not only the evident splendours of the Pavilion, Brunswick Terrace and Kemp Town, but the exuberance of the West Pier, the demureness of St. George's Chapel, and the impressive bizarrerie of St. Bartholomew's Church. There is even a view of the Metropole, which should please Edwardians. ("The room in which I provided evidence is marked with a cross.") Mr. Piper handles aquatint with great variety and ingenuity—in one plate he uses print to represent bricks, and so successfully that the device is at first not noticed. The edition with hand-coloured plates would make a present worthy of a Prelate. Lord Alfred Douglas contributes a preface, with reminiscences of early visits to Brighton in the company of the father who was in so lunatic a fashion to devastate his life. The publishers deserve our gratitude for offering these enchanting original prints at a most moderate price. Book-collectors, who often live enviably sheltered lives, should perhaps be told that Mr. Piper is known as one of the most accomplished and promising of our younger painters.

The other books on my list naturally cannot compare with the pair above. But *Five Centuries of Ballet Design* is a charming and amusing assembly of plates illustrating costume and scenery from the time of the deplorable Henri III to the present. The grotesque costumes designed by Daniel Rabel for Louis XIII, Gissey's Turks and Aethiopians for Louis XIV, Jean Berain's symbolical costumes, Louis Boquet's pastoral costumes for Louis XV, are specially engaging. Then come the romantic ballets, in which Taglioni, Grisi and Elssler were drawn by Chalon, Bouvier and Brandard; the late nineteenth century is ransacked for a few peculiarities, and then we have a selection of Diaghileff and post-Diaghileff designs, including Benois's original setting for *Les Sylphides*, which, as Mr. Beaumont justly observes, is far superior to all later settings for this ballet.

India and China includes Burma and Ceylon, but not French Indo-China. There are over 200 large plates, many of them showing buildings that are little known in Europe. Mr. Nawrath's photographs are straightforward, remarkably clear in detail, and admirably reproduced. The notes are parsimonious, and assume a knowledge of Indian geography that few of us possess. Nor is there any indication of the main outlines of Indian architectural history. But how fascinating, how bewildering is the exuberance here revealed. The Pekin subjects, which are fairly familiar, are followed by an extraordinary variety of buildings. The Watch-tower at Mandalay, the Dragon Pagoda at Amarapura, Sagaing, the pottery houses at Bandigarampudur, the Ganesh Temple at Vijayanagar, the Rock Temple at Kondane, the Buddhist cave at Nasik, Champaner, Dwarka and Girnar are shown in all their beauty or peculiarity. This is an entrancing book.

The Rodin book is excellent value. It contains 115 admirable and large photographs, chosen to represent every phase of the sculptor's work. There are no drawings, which is a pity, as these stand up to the passing years better than much of the sculpture. The marbles, in particular, show the bad influence of the period, an *Art Nouveau* deliquescence or swooniness, as if the stone had melted and run. But looking at these photographs, you cannot but feel that Rodin was a whale of an artist. His romanticism was unchecked by any innate discretion, and in the *Balzac*, for instance, it overflowed into expressionism. But behind his excesses there was always a profound knowledge: his power to

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HEINEMANN

suggest movement was extraordinary, his handling of clay showed great sensibility to the character of bronze, and, like the greatest baroque artists, he could make every ripple of detail contribute to the unity and general impetus of the whole. This handsome book makes one long to revisit the Rodin Museum in the Hotel de Biron.

Alas, it is impossible to be polite about *Painting in England*. The text is unpretentious and safe, but the pictures are very poorly reproduced. The coloured plates are caricatures of the originals, and the black-and-white are incomprehensibly bad. A gloomily comic picture of Clytaemnestra by Lord Leighton is the most interesting feature of the book.

Scandinavian Peasant Costume is a pleasantly produced book with illustrations in colour and in black-and-white. Madame Schiaparelli could borrow from some of these bizarre, rustic inventions, notably the hats of Ringkobingegnen and Amron in Denmark. We are shown the origin of our Fair Isle style at Telemark in Norway, while many of these Scandinavian costumes show foreign influence. In the chapter on Finland we learn that under Russian rule peasant costumes were simplified as a result of the campaign to weaken national feeling. Sweden is specially rich in peasant costumes, some of which have charmed us in Rolf de Maré's Swedish ballets. Lapland and Greenland, but not Iceland, are included in this book. Mrs. Primmer's drawings are very clear and well produced, so that the book can be recommended for practical use by designers for the stage.

The Queen's Book of the Red Cross is charitable in purpose, and the public for which it is intended will no doubt enjoy it. The illustrations are by such painters as Russell Flint, Norman Wilkinson, and Mabel Lucie Attwell. Among the writers who contribute, Mr. de la Mare, Day Lewis and Mr. Eliot represent the highbrows, the last with a dog-poem and a parrot-plus-barmaid poem. Mr. A. A. Milne signs an amusing fragment of dialogue. Miss Gracie Fields, Mr. Charles Morgan and Mr. Ivor Novello give us of their best. A Mrs. Miniver item can be recommended to collectors, and an authoress new to us, Fuby Ferguson, can be recommended to connoisseurs of Mrs. Miniver.

The pencil-drawings illustrating *Letters to Young Shooters* are innocent, and the text is sensible and pleasantly informative. An excellent present for any boy interested in bringing down the pheasant, the partridge and the grouse. RAYMOND MORTIMER

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These books fall naturally into two groups, one for pleasant children and the other for little prigs. The first in the pleasant group, *Super Fun*, was written by five boys at a preparatory school, and one may take it as being the authors' idea of what a book for boys ought to be like. The five boys go off to stay at a farm in the Lake District, which happens to be the hide-out of a gang of jewel thieves. There is no idle flirting with probability. The lonely farmhouse holds among other people the lunatic foreigner who is the brains of the gang and his bodyguard, who is a gigantic negro. Lights flicker mysteriously across lakes by night, strange things happen in caves stuffed with jewels by day, and detectives entrust priceless bracelets to twelve-year-olds for the sake of safety. It is interesting to see how much of the book is devoted to building up suspense and atmosphere, and to the sort of detail children aren't meant to care about. It is quite obvious that the authors have tried to write something as much like an adult thriller as possible, saving the substitution of boys for the usual brash young man and his dumb love. Good for all prep-school-age boys. *Storms on the Labrador* is for over-tens; it's a straight story about fishermen on the Labrador coast which has a thirteen-year-old boy as a hero. It isn't written down at all and it's about tough people, dogs, adventures, and boats. For the boat-loving, *Columbus Sails* can be recommended; it is the story of the voyage of the *Santa Maria*, *Pinta*, and *Nina*, written in the form of a narrative by a member of the crew. The boats in the illustrations are seaworthy and convincing and the book should do well for anyone over eight and under thirteen. *A Traveller in Time* is for girls only, up to an unsophisticated sixteen. The story is of a little girl of late Victorian England who slips back into the last unhappy years of Mary Queen of Scots and becomes involved in a conspiracy to free the Queen. It's prettily and sensitively done, and if *Greensleeves* sticks in the adult throat one must remember that for the young it has no associations in the barbola line. *Toby Twinkle* is a missing heir story, the modern version of the one about the swineherd who was a prince stolen away as a baby. Children who fear the jeers of the herd and say they don't like fairy stories will like it. The Old Witch is a slattern who keeps the missing heir missing, the Bandits are a couple of smart burglars, the kindly Gnome is a junk dealer, and the Good Fairy, who straightens everything out in the end, is a man with big ears who drives a milk lorry. The book is agreeably written and has pleasant drawings by Walter Trier; six to eight. *An Experiment with St. George* is the story of what happened after the Dragon was killed. It is an imaginative story compounded of all mythologies; it's full of rich and exciting stuff about witches, warlocks, Circe and her beasts, and nameless monsters that can only be killed with silver weapons. It is material which parents generally make the mistake of shielding their children from, but it is the sort of story children like, and the triumph of rather ordinary people over the appalling and incalculable is reassuring rather than the other thing. The illustrations are unusually good, solid and dramatic. All these books are healthy in that they are concerned with the splendour and strangeness of the world; they suggest a great many exciting things that might be round the next headland, over the horizon, or further up the stream. Being about the adult world, they suggest any number of children's games, and they give the imagination something to bite on as well.

Group two, being written about the child's world in a very nervous way, suggest nothing whatever. *Smugglers' Gap* centres about the mysterious disappearance of a girl on one of the Scilly Islands, there are sinister comings and goings of boats and French-

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LONGMANS

speaking people—and it all boils down to a case of scarlet fever unreported to the Medical Officer. Horrid little goody-goodies as the Lockett children are, they are almost surpassed by the brats in *Secret Water*. "They're the politest children I've ever met," says an adult who strays into the story. She is quite right; the little beasts are out of place in secular writing. The story is about sailing in the waters near Pin Mill, and it has all the flatness of a children's game "improved" by an adult. A phrase in *Oxus in Summer* also gives one a key to the book: "Remember they're always in shorts or jodhpurs, and nearly always on ponies." The young authors deal with *Le vice anglais* with something of Dean Farrar's bravura; the high point of the story is a duel with horse-whips, which is as good as anything in *Eric*. How odd that this arid stuff should be considered healthier than the romantic sort of book which makes a child long for its maturity: "for children, about children . . ." one might as well bind their feet in the Chinese fashion. ANTHONY WEST

FUNNY BOOKS

Homes Sweet Homes. By OSBERT LANCASTER. *John Murray.* 6*s.*
The 1940 New Yorker Album. *Hamish Hamilton.* 12*s.* 6*d.*
A Confidential History of Modern England. By O. SOGLOW. *Duckworth.* 5*s.*
All's Well That Ends Swell. By "FISH." *Methuen.* 5*s.*
Le Sport. By NICOLAS BENTLEY. *Gollancz.* 6*s.*
The First Six Months are the Worst. By JAMES FITTON and HAROLD F. HUTCHISON. *Peter Davies.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
Truly Rural. By DAVID PETTIWARD. Illustrated by PAUL CRUM. *Dent.* 5*s.*
Home Truths. By WILLIAM DOUGLAS HOME. Drawings by VICKY. *Lane.* 5*s.*
Grandma. By MABEL CONSTANDUROS. *Muller.* 5*s.*
General Cargo. By A. P. HERBERT. *Methuen.* 6*s.*

Every year since 1066 *and All That* appeared, publishers have felt that Christmas is the time to bring out a funny book. The new tradition is a good one, though the books have not been so effortless and funny. Effortless they very often are. Someone has had a good idea at a congenial Saturday to Monday party, and run something up in the week that followed, buzzed it along to the publishers, who have slammed it along to THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION which has whizzed it along to me. I should say, in parentheses, that THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION is like Wigan to the professional humorist: it is only mentioned thrice in the funny books I have for review this year, by A. P. Herbert, Osbert Lancaster, and Harold F. Hutchinson. But when you consider that no other weekly is mentioned at all, it shows how popular, or unpopular, THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION is.

Of the funny books this year, the funniest is Osbert Lancaster's *Homes Sweet Homes*. It is on the same lines as *Pillar to Post*, his last year's success, but deals with interiors instead of exteriors. Each illustration is accompanied by prose written in a mock-serious manner. Most of the book is devoted to the decorative whims of the late nineteenth and present centuries, periods of which Mr. Lancaster is obviously very fond while he mocks. There are many enjoyable details in the illustrations. My favourite is the Stockbroker's Tudor bedroom, with the flowered chintz round the four poster, the sampler on the wall and the electric light-switch by the oaken door with its great oaken lock. The Vogue Regency is another depressingly observant picture. The part of the book which deals with Medieval and Renaissance interiors, that is to say the first part, is not so enjoyable because it is not so accurate and the text and details are not enough. Moreover by making the interiors and the people funny, the jokes can descend to *Punch* level. There is no doubt that this book will be a great success and it would be nice to think that people would see their own rooms in some of the pictures and never commit the same mistakes again. But I fear we are too proud to see caricatures of ourselves.

I do not like to have to include Mr. Lancaster's work among the funny books of the year. But I must, now that he is established as a popular humorist and appears among all the other funny books. For Mr. Lancaster is above most popular humorists. He knows what is good from what is bad and why. He is sensitive at a time when very few people are. He is on the side of the angels. With the big public he now has, he will be able to do more than any of us in giving people a right sense of architecture who formerly had no sense of it at all. I should like his next year's book not to be a wholly funny book. I would like him to risk failure and produce something which showed us what was good and what was bad. He could tackle local authorities, their corruption, inefficiency, blatancy and cruelty in architectural matters. He need not use only his own drawings for showing what is good. He has the sensibility and the enthusiasm, I know he has the courage to risk a temporary setback in the cause of public decency.

The *New Yorker Album* is the next funniest. I made an analysis of the jokes and found that 39 per cent. were too outspoken for *Punch* and only 2 per cent. might just as well have appeared in *Punch*. Only 10 per cent. were too American for us and almost 40 per cent. of the total were really funny and original. This makes the book worth having.

Soglow's *Confidential History of Modern England* will be interesting to those who find jokes drawn in the security of America about England funny and one called the Cliveden Set is very funny indeed.

"Fish" has turned out this year to be a funny writer, and I very much like his or her remarks on Civil Servants "with the ability for referring all unimportant questions to a SENIOR, while DEFERRING ALL IMPORTANT MATTERS FOR EVER." His or her book, *All's Well that Ends Swell*, in purple, white and brown, has some funny drawings, less "Fish-like" than formerly, and some humorous advice such as how to stay at a big country house. "ALWAYS BE THERE AND NEVER BE USEFUL for useful guests get the worst bedrooms."

James Fitton illustrates, in a rather improper manner with the jokes about Freud and chamberpots, a book of loving advice on babies written by Harold F. Hutchison and called *The First Six Months are the Worst.*

Nicholas Bentley has written some essays to go with his comic illustrations of sport in *Le Sport*. The essays are full of quotations, many of them illuminating and unfamiliar. He sees how ridiculous many people look when they are playing or watching games.

Of the two books of humorous verse, both have rather the effect of last night's rhyming consequences and Daniel Pettiward's *Truly Rural* is the better, for Mr. Pettiward would like to be a

New Books for Christmas

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books for christmas

fiction

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general

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the bodley head

poet and one sees his poetry coming in here and there, more in the humorous poems than the nature ones; I like the bit where he goes into a barn:

Where the old Daimler rotted in the gloom.

But at present his verse seems to be W. H. Davies with a dash of A. P. Herbert.

Home Truths is illustrated verse in Hudibrastic metre. This metre must be very good to be readable, and when it is diffuse, as much of it is here, it is dull.

Grandma, by Mabel Constanduros, and well-illustrated by her nephew Denis, is quite a re-awakening of the humour W. W. Jacobs invented for Bob Pretty. I enjoyed it.

Lastly comes one of our most popular humorists, A. P. Herbert, with the annual collection of his contributions to *Punch* called *General Cargo*. The subjects are, of course, Parliament, the law, politics, political procedure, beer, village cricket, the Thames Reaches and sailing. Good, healthy, English stuff. Mr. Herbert has a nice after-dinner wit. "Now too that delicious railway problem arises: *Shall one have lunch just after breakfast or just before tea?*" This is the best of A. P. Herbert. He is good too, just as he is good in Parliament, at showing up abuses. But he carries on a joke far too long. Something which would do well as a paragraph, is a short story. Two sentences in the telephone directory, "Don't say 'Hullo.' Announce your identity," make him write a long, long poem with a repetition of the same joke reshuffled in long words, sixth-form humour, W. S. Gilbert patter which has long ceased to be funny and was never poetical:

Don't say "Hullo." Announce your identity.
Indicate your species. Classify your entity.
Enumerate the marks by which the scientific mind
Can certainly distinguish you from others of your kind;
State your major measurements, and where you were designed—
But don't say "Hullo."

and so on for four stanzas.

Anyone with an ear for metre and a public school accent can write this sort of facetiousness. It is facile and superior. That is the trouble with much modern humour. It is facile and superior. Our great humorists were neither. They were artists and creative writers.

JOHN BETJEMAN

Books for Christmas

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The Sieve of Blindness

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It is impossible to characterize this collection of choice essays. They have such delightful charm that we can imagine Robert Louis Stevenson or Sir James Barrie sitting down to read them with great joy.

EPWORTH PRESS, 25 CITY RD., E.C.1

BESTIARY

The Seasons and the Farmer. By F. FRASER DARLING and C. F. TUNNICLIFFE. *Cambridge.* 6*s.*
Animals and Zoos To-day. By R. BIGALKE. *Cassell.* 8*s.* 6*d.*
My Animal Friends. By VERA CHAPLINA. *Routledge.* 6*s.*
The Under-water Zoo. By THEODORE MCCLINTOCK. *Routledge.* 6*s.*
Chin-Pao and the Giant Pandas. By CHIANG YEE. *Country Life.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
The Youngest Camel. By KAY BOYLE. *Faber.* 3*s.* 6*d.*
Animal Stories. By WALTER DE LA MARE. *Faber.* 8*s.* 6*d.*
The White Buck. By ALLEN W. SEABY. *Nelson.* 6*s.*
The Wednesday Pony. By PRIMROSE CUMMING. *Blackie.* 5*s.*
The Chestnut Pony. By PAMELA PHILLIPS and MYRTLE JERRETT. *Country Life.* 5*s.*
Hobby Horse Hill. By LAVINIA DAVIS. *Heinemann.* 6*s.*
A House in the Woods. By PHYLLIS KELWAY. *Black.* 3*s.* 6*d.*
First Animal Friends. By WILLIAM MCGREAL. *Oxford.* 3*s.* 6*d.*
Bunty and Bianco. By VERA ELKAN. *Hamish Hamilton.* 5*s.*

These fourteen books are mainly about animals, either real or fictional, and with the exception of *First Animal Friends*, *Bunty and Bianco* and *A House in the Woods*, which belong to the category of baby picture-books, they will be mostly suitable for children over seven. The first five are non-fictional and in my view they will be found more alive and more valuable to the imaginative animal-loving child than the six subsequent books in which animals are treated more or less as human characters. These books have also driven me finally to a conclusion I have been slowly approaching ever since a growing family forced me to consider literature, occasionally, from the point of view of the child. This is that the English, with some obvious exceptions, do not excel in the art of devising books for children. The French Classics, *Babar* and *Yacki*, many notable Americans of which *Ferdinand*, *Ezekiel* and the lavish productions of Laura Adams Armer spring instantly to mind—these are only a few examples of foreign creations beside which many English books, notably those for older children, frequently recall the cold suet pudding left over from yesterday. In support of this idea I would indicate the excellence of *The Youngest Camel*, from America, *My Animal Friends*, from Russia, *Chin-Pao*, from China, and Mr. de la Mare's very good international anthology.

To these remarks Dr. Fraser Darling's *The Seasons and the Farmer* is a splendid exception. The idea of writing a truthful, unsentimental, informative account of the daily life of the English countryside and the men who farm it is apparently so ridiculously simple that no one, hitherto, seems to have thought it worth enlarging into a book. Between the child's alphabet of the farm and the rather heavy-handed nature-excursion catalogue ("If we look closely we shall observe, etc."), there has been little to give the child a basically sound picture of country life that would at once educate and fascinate him. *The Seasons and the Farmer* is dedicated to the proposition that for a child "facts about real things are his master passion." Thus it does not talk in terms of vague pride of England's green and pleasant land, but explains, in an admirable chapter on grasses, on what that traditional greenness scientifically depends; it explains why and how hay is made and when it is best made and for what reasons; it does not accept the English countryside as something naturally and originally beautiful in which the part of man has been desecrative and parasitic, but as something owing almost all its peculiar beauty to man's ceaseless contact. In this way, never sentimental, never exuberant or preaching, it evolves a picture of England and the English farmer which has at once the soundness of an encyclopaedia and the beauty of a poem. Hay-making, harvest, ploughing, hoeing, soils, grasses, animals, poultry—all are treated with the same admirable balance of fact and enchantment. Further enriched by some excellent black and white drawings by C. F. Tunnicliffe this book is, I think, the perfect thing of its kind.

Both *My Animal Friends* and *Animals and Zoos To-day* are zoo books, the first from Russia, the second from South Africa, based on real and intimate experience with animals in captivity. Their authors refuse to make the commonest mistake of animal lovers—"the tendency to humanise the actions of their charges" and of not judging animal behaviour with consistent objectivity, and the result is that they have produced two excellent books. *My Animal Friends* is simply a collection of little stories of the animals, sick

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or orphaned, which the author sometimes took home to her flat from the Moscow Zoo. They included a couple of bears, a wolf, a young elk, a walrus, a hyena, a lynx and finally a lion-cub, to which the whole of the second part of the book is devoted. I find the book full of the enchantment of reality. *Animals and Zoos To-day*, dealing largely with the immense fauna of South Africa and in particular of the Kruger National Park, is much wider in scope. From its index of fourteen columns I select, at random, the following names: aard-wolf, antbear, bloubok, erd vark, oorbietjie, Klipspringer, inyala, Kudu, Gompah; from its meaty pages the following chance facts: that the gestation period of the Virginian opossum is eleven days and that the young, when born, are so small that sixteen can lie in a teaspoon; that the South African lion is increasing so rapidly that it may in time exterminate the herbivorous species on which it preys; that there is not the slightest evidence that snakes suck milk from cows; that there are at least 330 zoological gardens in the world to-day, as compared with eleven in 1850. This is, perhaps, not exclusively a child's book: I should recommend it on the sly to parents, as a very present reference book in time of trouble. *The Under-Water Zoo* is a lively little diary of the happenings in a home aquarium: a gay pageant-drama of water-boatmen, snails, dragonfly nymphs, tadpoles, minnows—all the creatures which any child can net for himself from the nearest pond. A lovely and specialised little book, informative and simple: a clear case for choosing the child for the book, and not the book for the child. I have included *Chin-Pao and the Giant Pandas* among the non-fictional works partly because, although a fictional story, it deals with the pandas in an informative way, and indeed there is no need to go any farther for a panda story than this delicious little Chinese tale, grave and lovely and adventurous, with its jade and gold and pink illustrations in the traditional Chinese manner: the most poetical book on the list.

Among the fiction Miss Kay Boyle's *The Youngest Camel* is, with the possible exception of Mr. de la Mare's volume, the most distinguished creation. In a class where every other book appears to be a middle-class romance of a girl and a pony it is a pleasure to travel across the desert with this small camel, who did not smell nice, asked the wrong questions, was obstinate and fell into temptation. This book has all the style, intelligence and beauty to be expected of a writer of Miss Boyle's class. Mr. de la Mare's volume is a double-decker: downstairs are crammed animal stories of all nations and periods, partly rewritten by Mr. de la Mare himself and choicely illustrated by some cuts from Topsell's seventeenth-century *Historie of Foure-Fotted Beastes*; on top there reposes a huge and, I feel, rather superfluous preface, a little ponderous in its explanations and detracting from the proper value of an otherwise excellent book. *The White Buck* I should also recommend warmly; its accuracy of observation and fact, by which the creatures of the New Forest are described authentically and without sentimentality, makes it a safe bet for the imaginative child of ten who likes its facts served with sensibility and beauty. *The Wednesday Pony*, *The Chestnut Pony* and *Hobby Horse Hill* are all in some way concerned with horses, riding, and children appropriately dressed; they tell chatty, straightforward and to me rather ordinary stories in which the horses are heroes. As a parent I find them dull: an opinion completely nullified by the quarrelsome avidity with which my two small daughters struggle to share them. By contrast *A House in the Woods*, *Bunty and Bianco* and *First Animal Friends* enchant me by their unaffected simplicity, their fidelity to very simple truths, their charming portraiture of nestlings, squirrels, dogs, penguins, lambs, dormice, butterflies, and by their knack of capturing on the page just those things, in the right attitude and at the right moment, which inspire the small child to wonder. H. E. BATES

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Modern Armaments. By PROFESSOR A. M. LOW. *Gifford.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The threshold of science, which divides the long labour of scientific knowledge from the "romance" of it, is a peculiarly intoxicating place. How difficult it is for the layman to pass from that doorstep into the forbidding mansions beyond; how easy and how stimulating to linger there in the hands of the right conductor, under the spell of his persuasive voice, peering with an access of power into the immense complications of the dimly lighted interior. Professor Low is an excellent scientific showman, as these two examples of his art very well show. Whatever else may be said about these books, however roughly they might be handled beyond the doorstep, they pass the first test of literature at whatever level. It does one good to read them; having read them, one feels better.

These benefits are not perhaps very lasting, they amount to no more than a species of mental inflation, but it is grand to get for once in a while mentally above oneself, to know (if only for a moment) the common origin of silk stockings and explosives, to be assured that for a short time at least, before the glory fades, one will be bold to bandy opinions about refrigeration plant, synthetic rubber or automatic telephone exchanges across the dinner-table. If in fact the layman's life is too short to know with any depth how so great a number of things work, it is no bad thing to have the transient illusion of knowing, and it is this which gives Professor Low's books their tonic value. He has almost all the qualifications for his task: a real gift of rapid and effective summary, a power of clear and concrete illustration, infectious enthusiasm, real knowledge of the structures of scientific work and of industry, and (most important of all) a rare knack of stopping just at that distance from a subject at which one may get a rough idea of what it is about without being told anything at all of its tiresome detail. This is partly the art of the illusionist. Professor Low has a habit of slipping in the phrase "non-technically speaking." This is the signal for his sleight of hand. But one need not worry; out comes the rabbit from Professor Low's hat. It is momentarily as large and clear as life; one sees it sharply for the first time, one even connects it with many very dissimilar objects which have popped out of the same receptacle; one is all agog for the next exhibit; the show goes on. It is not, I think, a show of uniform excellence. I fancy the applause at any moment would be loudest from those on the doorstep who know least about the matter in hand. For example, my ignorance of electrical theory is great, but I know something of aeronautics. It may or it may not be significant that I found Professor Low's chapters on the photo-electric cell and allied subjects extremely stimulating, while I yawned my way through his aeroplane exhibits. If there is anything in this it only means

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that Professor Low's books are not good in a way they were never intended to be. In their way they are very good indeed.

Modern Armaments in particular is recommended to any intellectual who is tired of contorting himself in the elucidation of War Aims. It will be a relief to him to drop the capital letters and learn under Professor Low, as far as the Official Secrets Acts allow, exactly what we are aiming at the enemy, how these things are made, filled, ranged and fired, and finally the devious ways by which we seek to snare those which are aimed at ourselves. It is now of some importance to know, even if only from the doorstep of scientific warfare, what goes on in a big gun or a submarine detector. Perhaps it is rather a pity that Professor Low has not resisted the temptation to restore the capital letter and write some chapters on the philosophy of War. At this point he may find his audience swarming on to the stage: for here we are all illusionists.

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Two Men in the Antarctic. By THOMAS WYATT BAGSHAWE. *Cambridge Press.* 15s.
Modern Arctic Exploration. By GUNNAR SEIDENFADEN. *Cape.* 12s. 6d.

The probability that there will be a shortage of new travel-books during the next few years, as the conditions created by the war are not favourable to the gratification of *Wanderlust*, should rouse the reader with a predilection for them to take advantage of the present generous supply. Let us escape with intrepid travellers to far-off lands and seas while we can.

Mr. Gibbons invites us to escape to Portugal, but to a part of it rarely visited by tourists. His account of a four-months' sojourn in a village standing high above the Upper Douro, profusely illustrated by photographs of the landscape and of the natives, has convinced me that the notion that Portugal is as inferior to Spain, as, say, Mendelssohn is to Bach, is entirely erroneous. I sympathise with Mr. Gibbons's wish that "some artist would come up here and paint this country just as the winter is coming on. The Alto Douro is pretty marvellous." That artist would have to be as willing as Mr. Gibbons was to endure many discomforts and hardships. The hardship of a rigorous winter, setting in suddenly after a tropical autumn, might be mitigated, however, by wearing warmer clothes than the black coat and striped trousers in which Mr. Gibbons shivered. A traveller of his experience ought to have known better than to set out for a remote Portuguese village in the mountains in a town suit. He was punished for not taking more thought about his wardrobe by an uncomfortable feeling that he "was out of the picture," and by an illness which forced him to spend some days in a hospital in Oporto. Even there he was able to gather some moss for his book. Its title is misleading. He is an expert moss-gatherer. But diffidence in Mr. Gibbons amounts to a disease. "I always fail to write my stories properly. . . . Here I was in a village where no Englishman had stayed before, and I ought to have the story of a million, and then was failing to write it." There is far too much of this self-depreciatory cackle. The reader who can have patience with it will be rewarded by getting a vivid impression of people and things in Tras-Os-Montes. He can, too, pick up some valuable information about Dr. Salazar and his reforms, and have the wonderful experience of visiting Miranda, the seat of an extinct bishopric. Mr. Gibbons writes, or rather chatters, about whatever comes into his head. As he recalls Miranda, a host of queerly lovely things swarm into it. Their charm is not affected by their being tumbled out higgledy-piggledy in untidy heaps of words.

Chinese Hunter is a far more orderly book. The material is neatly arranged. Every sentence is clean and polished. I started reading it with a certain prejudice, thinking it impossible that a story of big-game hunting in North China could interest me, but very soon I was captivated by the masterly way the story is told. Mr. Quincey, introduced in the foreword as "Professor of Shakespeare and English drama in the seventeenth century," and indeed he looks more like a scholar than a sportsman in his photographs, writes English better than many Englishmen, certainly better than Mr. Gibbons or any other author on my list. I select a passage in which he vindicates his passion for hunting wild beasts as an example of his command of our language:

> We leave our comfortable homes to expose ourselves to acute discomforts partly in order to recover some of the fundamental joy which primitive man daily experienced, and which our over-civilised life prevents us from tasting. Yes, we deliberately become more animal in order to enjoy the animal aspect of our nature. On a hard hunting-trip in mid-winter civilised man learns once more to earn his food and eat it with hearty appetite, to feel the delicious comfort of warmth and shelter after exposure, to enjoy the life-renewing qualities of sound sleep after utter exhaustion, and incidentally to appreciate a respite from the eternal temptations of sex.

At the age of fifty-one this Chinese professor has not a single grey hair, not an ounce of superfluous flesh. He is capable of doing almost everything he did when he was twenty-five. He attributes this to his hard hunting-trips. "Man cannot live by bread alone. Very true. But neither can he live by mind or spirit alone." It is not necessary to be interested in the shooting of wild goat and pig, big-horned and small-horned, or to know the difference between a 12-gauge shot-gun and a .500 express to enjoy this tale. Its merits as a philosophical autobiography perhaps exceed its merits as a record of a sportsman's adventures.

Mr. Wray, a young New Zealander, dreamed while he sat at his office desk in Auckland, adding up figures, of cruising round the islands of the South Pacific in his own ship. How the dream came true he describes in *South Sea Vagabonds*. He spent the fortnight after he got the sack, not in looking for another job as a clerk, but in looking at men at work in a boat-builder's yard on the construction of a 35-foot cruiser. "It certainly looked fairly simple, the way *they* did it. Lay down the keel, and build up the stem and stern-post. Bolt on a few frames and bung on the planking." This was all the education Mr. Wray had had in boat-building when he started building the ship of his dream, 35 feet in length, with a beam of 12 feet, on his father's lawn. He had borrowed his tools, he had found his timber, kauri logs, buried in shingle on the coast, and borrowed a boat from a nautical friend to tow them into harbour. In this home-made ship, Mr. Wray, almost entirely ignorant of navigation, started on a maiden voyage to the Friendly Isles. His crew of three were drawn from "those cheerful souls who will go to sea in anything, from a bath-tub up, just for the fun of it." None of these young men had

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ever been out of sight of land before, not even in a steamer. Yet they came to no harm. The *Ngatahi* had been so well and strongly built that she was quite capable of looking after herself. Subsequently Mr. Wray made many more adventurous voyages. He describes them well in his schoolboyish slang ("dashed" and "blasted" are his favourite adjectives) making light of the endurance, courage and resource with which he faced difficulties and dangers. The claim in the Mayor of Auckland's foreword that this is a "remarkable contribution to the literature of the sea" is not to be disputed.

Major Raven-Hart, the well-known, but to me hitherto unknown, canoeing expert, has during the last ten years paddled through no fewer than 16,000 miles of the world's inner waterways. The paddle with which I am concerned was down the rivers of Burma. Major Hart chats pleasantly and informatively about Burmese scenery, art, music, history, legends and customs. One custom, disconcerting to the English traveller who expects to be thanked for a tip, is to refrain from all expressions of gratitude in words. The explanation given to Major Hart was that whatever A does for B, the benefit is his, so why should B thank him? No explanation was given of the abstention from greetings. A Burmese never says "good-morning," or "hullo," or "how are you?" or anything of that sort. Someone has described the Burmese as "the Irish of the East." Perhaps that explains why Major Hart, an Irishman, got on with them so well. In his opinion only two per cent. of the English who live in Burma understand them, certainly a point of similarity to the Irish.

The object of the expedition to Graham Land (1920–22) was to extend the discoveries of the Swedish Antarctic Expedition of 1903 under Dr. Nordenskjold, by continuing the mapping of the western coast-line of the Weddell Sea. The two senior members of the 1920 expedition got cold feet after reaching the Antarctic, and decided to abandon the venture. The two junior ones, a mercantile officer in the early twenties, and a geologist of 19, refused to return with their more experienced colleagues. They set up house in a leaky hut on a tiny islet, and confounded critics of their foolhardiness by managing to sustain life there under terribly hard conditions, and carry out their scientific task. Their experiences are recorded by Mr. Bagshawe, the youthful geologist, in *Two Men in the Antarctic*. The greater part of the book consists of extracts from logs kept at the time. Rather dry, factual reading for anyone not keenly interested in polar exploration undertaken in the cause of science. I found Gunnar Seidenfaden's *Modern Arctic Exploration* more attractive. This Danish writer, whose book has been admirably translated by Naomi Walford, has the art of handling a professional subject in a way that fascinates a person wholly ignorant of it. (I could have said this, too, about *Chinese Hunter*.) In the first chapter there is a brilliant summary of the history of polar exploration, and of the great changes in its technique during this century. It was enough to convince me that Gunnar Seidenfaden is a poet as well as a scientist, and I read on, enthralled. In Arctic exploration the machine is now the important factor. Equipped with aeroplanes, wireless, motor boats, propelled sledges, the nine-lensed camera, and other inventions, modern explorers have not to take the same risks as their heroic predecessors. The story of the rescue of the four Russians who drifted over a thousand miles on a dwindling ice-floe in 1937 proves that the machine has considerably reduced the risk of being lost in the Arctic, and perishing there.

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The Führer's reckless *démarche* occurred too late in the year to enable our gallant authoresses to prepare for this Christmas such heartening yarns as Madcap Monica of the Maginot Line, Vivandière Vera, or Daredevil Dulcie's Dive-Bomber. So this year the girls' books are the usual gay round of scrumptious study teas with that topping Senior, Hyacinth Duggleby, rags in the cubies (and no quarter with the bolsters) and diamond cut diamond on the lacrosse field.

The Term of Many Adventures is well named. Mrs. Hinford, who has moved her school to "an ancient Jacobean house" and brought "her thirty lassies out into the wilds to develop," knows a thing or two: "Too easily assumed responsibility is hurtful both to rulers and ruled. It creates that masterful spirit which we see bringing chaos in adult life." So she abolishes prefects and deals ruthlessly with any hanky-panky: "she trusted her girls and expelled them if they failed her," and indeed the year before had had to bid farewell to Annette Fandin (obviously a tempestuous Frog) "for smoking cigarettes and reading contraband novels." On the staff there is a bogus widow called Mrs. Lysden whose husband is "at present a convict in Dartmoor Jail"; after a successful literature class she thanks her pupils with "Girls . . . you have been sports." She has a son called Barry, "such a friendly little chap," who talks about "a lubly brekkus wif an egg and storberry jam." Prominent among the girls is Mogs Gordon, "as jolly and sporty as any boy," who will "be a topping nurse for wounded soldiers when she's grown up—do you know what I mean?" It is she who rescues Barry from the gypsies in a chapter called "Mogs of the Loyal Heart." There are three other fascinating characters: a dear old soul called Mrs. M'Lean who hoots-toots her way through the pages and has many a tale to tell of "Jacobite Jennie and her braw lover Hamish M'Farlane"; a mysterious Indian who refers to the girls as "The Missie-Babas" and looks "as though he might be a Thug": and a Mrs. Mingleton "who made a very great point about being her boys' 'big comrade' and 'elder sister Mum.'"

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tooth, in the dimple at the corner of her chin," and should you be tempted to doubt it you can see her picture on the cover depicting Nan fresh, apparently, from the most exacting room in a Turkish bath and wearing an arresting blouse covered in mauve stripes. The book is full of education and mentions, *en passant*, Emily Brontë, Constable, Neo-Platonism, Tennyson, *Saint Joan*, Rembrandt, Eugene Aram, *Les Malheurs de Sophie*, Edward VII and the *Times Literary Supplement*.

The St. Berga Swimming Pool begins with Pat receiving from her dying mother (" hot stuff in mixed tennis for years ") advice as to how to win the tournament : " Grip—grip that racket. Never go flabby and slack." So it was " a quiversome moment " when Pat reached the centre court, but she " played all out to ramp through " and by dint of " scooting in the right direction at the right moment," trounced " a muscular, strongly built girl named Maud Graham " whose " speciality was the 'cello." Pat, " loyal to everything Cumbrian," makes friends with Maisie Briton, an artist's daughter, whose father's " charming study of a vixen and her cubs had been bought by Queen Mary herself." As the end of term approaches some of the girls " were growing frantic to get their handicrafts finished " and Joan Chesterfield distinguishes herself by singing in *Night and Day*, a " simple cantata " which " seemed to be turning into an operetta." Lady Chesterfield, Joan's grandmother, is not keen on her taking up singing and wants to keep her " in prison in the Kensington flat," until the Vicar gives her a good talking-to, referring sombrely to " The Prince of Fear." Then Joan sings " Come unto Me " at the Sunday concert and, as a novel encore, confesses to a cardinal misdemeanour and rushes from the room ; the awkward pause is tided over by Miss Jordan : " Come Maud ! . . . we will have your 'cello solo." Lady Chesterfield is a *Young Visiters* character who lives in Bellevue Mansions and " indulged in very choice China tea at nine o'clock, with cake which she had sent from Edinburgh." She goes to a concert, faints and is carried out ; she is recognised by the audience : " That was Lady Chesterfield ! " —that was.

Sally, of *Wild West Sally*, lives with her uncle, Trapper Silas Troon, a keen harmonium player, who is referred to as Ole Timer, or old Nunky. Sally (" little missy ") has an anxious time steering a car over a burning bridge, with the real driver slumped over the wheel beside her ; she prays violently and the answering of her prayer is " a wonderful little private experience." Sally, " though she was obviously untaught," " played several snatches of works by Beethoven and Mozart " on a " priceless Cremona violin " and by the end of the book we can heartily agree with Ole Timer, who says : " I've my memories of Sally, and some of 'em's sweet, and some of 'em's saucy."

The Jolly Book for Girls is very jolly indeed and includes a gripping tale called *Fire !* by Betty Ferguson. Eileen and Cora are in the laboratory, experimenting with nitrogen, but Cora is nervous : " ' Don't be so panicky, Cora,' retorted Eileen tartly " and a moment later, of course, she is a mass of flames and being rescued by the headmistress. Then " nasty little stories went round, hinting that Cora had deliberately allowed Eileen to burn." However, when the stables catch on fire, it is Cora who frees the horses, lies " burbling unintelligibly " in the San, and eventually emerges from Coventry surrounded by roses addressed " To the Bravest Funk."

And now for the boys' books. Manliness is the thing, and Bigglesworth in *Biggles Flies North* is a very manly fellow who undertakes an Arctic Airways mission which " isn't a kid-glove game for the parlour ; it's knuckle-dusters in the wide open spaces," and it is exactly thirty-two pages before his fist has " flown out in a vicious uppercut." It is, then, all the more surprising to find him in a shooting affray at the Three Star Saloon, drinking a cup of piping beef-extract, while his companion, Ginger, puts down some malted milk. One's confidence is further shaken by Biggles hesitating to come to grips with a man " nearly twice his weight " (in my day that was just the kind they liked), and there is a police officer who carries on like a head-monitress : " Any more shooting between you two and I'll take away your fire-arms certificates." However, after Biggles has drunk " quantities of steaming coffee," and after gold (" dust a-plenty ") has been discovered, there is a tremendous air battle which is ding-dong for several pages until finally Ginger throws a box containing twenty pounds of corned beef at the other aeroplane, completely disabling it.

" Oh, pshaw " cries Frank Denstone to his father on page twelve of *The Long Arm* ; " Oh, pshaw " cries Bartholomew Denstone back at him eight pages later. Then, after a great deal of gaiety on an Atlantic liner, Frank, " intoxicated with the fresh-

ness of it all;" boards the train for Winnipeg and the conductor makes him feel quite at home by pshawing before they've even reached Montreal. "Pshaw" says Sergeant Morrison when Frank gets to Edmonton, and in between whiles we have "Humph!" "Hmm!" "Faugh!" and "Phew!"; it is indeed "Life with the frills off."

A *Boys' Book of Fire-fighting* has long been wanted. At last one has arrived, but, in spite of some stimulating action photographs, I can't help feeling that boys would be more interested in how to start a really good fire, and that pictures of "Patent Xaust-Suds Generator," "Old and new types of helmet," and "Rear view of London Fire Brigade diesel fire-engine" will have rather a damping effect on Christmas morning.

And finally *Paddle Your Own Canoe* (or *Tips for Boys*) by Lord Baden-Powell. This book hasn't perhaps quite the sober appeal of the author's earlier volume, *Lessons from the Varsity of Life*, but it contains a welter of good advice in chapters such as "How to be Fit," "Sticking it Out," and "Keeping Your Pecker Up." The Chief Scout has done some delightful drawings too, particularly one of a native of the Watussi tribe jumping over Mr. Patrick Balfour "who, with his hat on, measures over six feet"; "but I haven't heard of any of you jumping six feet as yet! Perhaps it will come—eh?" Very likely, when the bombs begin to drop.

So unshakable, awe-inspiring and dominating are the head-girls in some of the stories I have mentioned, that one emerges from this riot of escapist literature with the wish that one of these martinets could be let loose on Europe. It wouldn't take her two twos to hand the more neurotic girls over to Matron for some plain food in the San and a dose of the usual remedy for biliousness, to clap the cheekier ones into Coventry and report the bullies to the headmistress, to confiscate all catapults, and finally to lead the net-ball team to a triumphant victory, in an away match of course.

ARTHUR MARSHALL

IN PARTIBUS

A Forgotten River. By CHRISTOPHER SANDEMAN. *Oxford University Press.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Wanderings in the Peruvian Andes. By DR. A. M. RENWICK. *Blackie.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

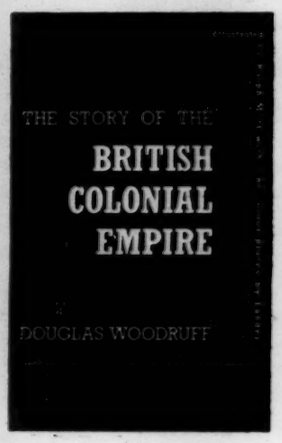
Hinterland Liberia. By ETTA DONNER. *Blackie.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

African Escapade. By ROGER COURTNEY. *Herbert Jenkins.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The Mabilles of Basutoland. By EDWIN W. SMITH. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

I wish I could agree with the publisher of *A Forgotten River* about the gentleness of Mr. Sandeman's irony. I should incline to call it heavily facetious, but there are some good descriptions of scenery and of people in this botanist's diary of a journey by raft and canoe down the Huallaga river and on mule-back and foot across the Andes, and a vast wealth of botanical information. It was, as the author frequently remarks, no joy-ride for one who was "conscious that fifty is a milestone which I can only see by looking over my shoulder!" The same route in the opposite direction was followed in one of the numerous Peruvian journeys undertaken by Dr. Renwick during thirteen years which he spent as head of the Anglo-Peruvian college in Lima, and described in *Wanderings in the Peruvian Andes*. His mind is somewhat pedestrian, but he does succeed in communicating his enjoyment, and provides the intending traveller with an excellent guide-book to the most interesting places in the Andes. He has some good stories of queer settlers in the primeval forest, and though he gasped to find that a "bright intelligent couple, so kind and hospitable" had dispensed with marriage, and his astonishment knew no bounds when a "cheerful good-natured agriculturist," the devoted father of a family of eighteen, was still a bachelor and only just about to propose marriage to a young lady, he was quite ready to adjust his values. It is rather puzzling that in a country where both writers frequently insist that time has no value they should so often regret missing unique occasions through not having spent a little more of it; in one case it might be the capture of some ravishing orchids, in the other a visit to some mysterious prehistoric ruins. The obsession of "getting there" seems to infect our slowest modes of locomotion, even if we have chosen them in order to dawdle. Dr. Renwick's book has some magnificent photographs of mountain scenery and Inca ruins; Mr. Sandeman's, in spite of his Leica, are rather unworthily small, and not nearly so numerous as one would wish. He would certainly agree!

Etta Donner's *Hinterland Liberia*, which is admirably illustrated,



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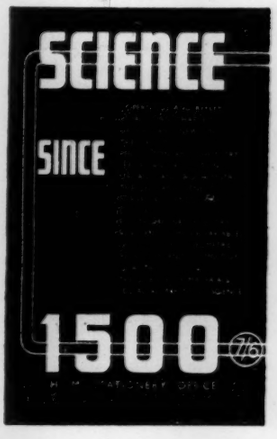

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describes a very different kind of journey, and her Liberia is worlds away from the stockinged, hatted and gowned Liberia of the coast which one has often seen portrayed. She travelled among the natives of the interior for two years without any white companions, was initiated into the Society of the Snake People, and collected a vast amount of fascinating material through direct contact with the natives. Naturally her most valuable information concerns the women, for despite her ubiquity and persistence she remained outside the male functions, and could not even get admitted to the Togba Society, consisting only of women, whose function is to serve as a defence against souls with magic powers, and leopards who fall on a village by night; for "no uncircumcized woman may lie on this bed beside the medicines." She did, however, learn a lot about this strange society, and the methods by which a woman, armed only with her leopard-medicine and a whip, succeeds in daunting the leopard or the evil wandering soul of a man. She gives some excellent photographs and the best account I have seen of the Snake Acrobats and their juggling with the living bodies of little girls. Here also magic medicines play an essential part; smeared with them the little girls allow themselves to be flung about in the sword-dance without even blinking. "With sword outstretched the dancer leaps towards the girl who is flung horizontally through the air towards him. It looks as if she must be transfixed on the point of the sword; a slight turn of the hand at the last moment, and the child glides past the sword-blade into the man's arms." Descriptions of trance, of masks and spirits, and of the belief in the transmigration of souls are of the highest interest; that of the water-people, with whom we find a striking parallel in the Bantu river-people described by Laubscher, is particularly charming. A child born to a woman after she has made offerings to the water-people is distinguished by its long hair. Such a child naturally shows a particular liking for the water and will dive into any stream, however deep:

> Neither water-people nor crocodiles will ever do it any harm. Such people are said to pay frequent visits to the water-people and remain at the bottom of the stream for hours on end. . . . If one of these descendants of the water-people dies, his soul goes back where it came from—the water; but all his possessions disappear, they run away—like water.

"'Merican palaver" is the native name for all civilisation, and there are some painful reflections on it in the last chapter. I will close with a remark of Toway, the "elephant-man," whose most cherished possession was a top-hat presented to him by the Freemasons. "In those days our magic was stronger than it is now. I do not know what we have done that it has lost so much of its strength since then. Perhaps we should have made more human sacrifices." Etta Donner might almost be called the Austrian counterpart of Ella Maillard, with a good deal of ethnology thrown in. She is certainly a less charming writer, but a most remarkable young woman, and her book is valuable in far more ways than I have space to indicate. It is very well translated by Winifred Deans.

Of all the travel books mentioned in this review, the most charming is also the least pretentious: *African Escapade*, by Roger Courtney, who has been a policeman in Palestine, done gold and mine prospecting in Africa, made a geological survey in the Mountains of the Moon, acted as White Hunter to tourists on safari, and been Chief Locust Control Officer for Kenya. He happens also to be an artist, and his language is vivid and sensitive. He is descending in a parachute:

> I was suddenly in a region of splendid peace. The roar of the plane was gone. I was in a place of drifting silence. Far below a dog was yapping and there was the slow note of a church-bell; but these were sounds of the earth and had nothing to do with this beautiful region through which I drifted like a twelve-stone angel wondrously suspended from an outsize halo.

In the Mountains of the Moon he sheds his clothes and goes out naked and barefoot into the bush. He gives a delightful account of unobtrusive encounters with wild animals under these conditions, which anyone who has ever sat naked in the woods will confirm. The following encounter was less to Mr. Courtney's taste:

> In Kampala I saw jet-black imitations of public-school boys. They wore, at the correct angle, a little over one eye, parti-coloured caps emblazoned with a coat of arms. They had on blazers very much of the old school type, and, of course, the school tie. One lot comprised thirty or forty, shepherded along the street by an equally dark master in plus-fours. He was smoking a large curved pipe in quite the hearty manner.

The "escapade" includes a dangerous journey into Abyssinia,

accompanied by two native boys, which nearly ended fatally, a night spent in some haunted ruins near Mombasa, and finally a solo journey in a canoe down the Nile from its source.

The Mabilles are not, as I ignorantly imagined, a native tribe of Basutoland, though they have almost qualified for the title, for they are a family of French missionaries who for nearly four generations have made it their home, identifying themselves entirely with the people and sharing all their sufferings during the horrible series of ineffectual wars waged against them by the Boers and the Natal Government, who coveted their land; wars which culminated in the "pacification" and virtual theft of Basutoland. They clothed the Basutos in Sunday best, interfered with their customs, hated their dances; and yet one can only feel for Adolphe and Adèle Mabille an affection and admiration approaching that in which they were held by the natives, and a profound sympathy for all their undertakings. The story is of absorbing and painful interest; the great leader who federated the Basuto tribes might say: "I am Moshesh, and my sister is named Peace"; the white men scrambling for Africa soon provided him with other relatives. There is a strange picture of General Gordon hurrying out of church just after he had begun to address the Sunday-school, and found by Mabille seated under a tree with his head in his hands. "My dear General, are you ill?" Gordon looked up with tears in his eyes. "No, I am not ill, but when I looked into the faces of these dear black lambs of the Saviour, and recalled all that the black race has suffered from my own, I could not go on . . . I had to leave." Adolphe Mabille died at fifty-five, worn out by his labours, which included a vast correspondence with England about the Basuto case. Adèle lived to be over eighty. This book, written by a missionary, is largely drawn from the diary of this heroic and able woman. It is a human and historical document of extraordinary interest.

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The Five Chinese Brothers. By CLAIRE HUCHET BISHOP and KURT WEISE. *Oxford.* 2s. 6d.

Mumfie's Uncle Samuel. By KATHARINE TOZER. *Murray.* 5s.

Nugger Nonsense. By CATHERINE SCALES. With drawings by MOUBRAY LEIGH. *Witherby.* 6s.

Ottik's Book of Stories By AMABEL WILLIAMS-ELLIS. Illustrated by SARAH NECHAMKIN. *Methuen.* 5s.

The Big Goose and the Little White Duck. By MEINDERT DE JONG. *Heinemann.* 5s.

Children's books are certainly not as frightening as they used to be. The reason probably is that the doctrines of the Psycho-Analysts have now found their way in watered-down form into all

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the Nannies and Mummies magazines and—filtering through the toyshops—left the nursery decontaminated and un-traumatic. In any case, it seems that it is not thought desirable for children to read of nothing but Ogres, Monsters and Crocodiles, of heads being chopped off, and children being thrown into cauldrons of boiling oil or fattened up until they make a nice juicy dinner for a Witch. I believe that this is an improvement: that in spite of the squeals of fascinated horror with which those old-fashioned stories were greeted, they caused a good deal more terror than pleasure. Adults take their own thrills in concentrated form; they do not expect ordinary novels (which are presumed to reflect in some sense the outer world) to have such a horrid population of savage and supernatural beings, nor to be so thickly sprinkled with violence and sudden death; and I cannot see why children should be expected to want every book a thriller.

There is one title in the above list which must have the Censor's H put against it. *Captain Slaughterboard Drops Anchor* is definitely horrific. Three adults who were looking over my shoulder while I turned its pages all screamed aloud. There is a nameless nightmare quality about the portraits of the pirates (half embryonic, half turniplike), and in my opinion any child to whom it is given is doomed to weeks of bad dreams if not a course of psycho-analysis in later life. No one could be frightened by *The Adventures of Michael and the Pirates*, a feeble little story with half-hearted illustrations. *Captain Binnacle* (for children of 6 to 10) is the best of the nautically flavoured books, being a straightforward story of three children's imaginary voyage in a dismantled steamboat with a sea-captain whose favourite expressions are "Jumping catfish!" and "Bilge-water!"

As goblins and witches become back numbers, the animal kingdom in the colours of real life and accurate zoological settings comes to the fore. *Scaf the Seal* is one of the best of the admirable Père Castor series translated from the French; the pictures of the frozen north, whales, wrecks, icebergs, and the Aurora Borealis are really stirring. *Sharp Ears, the Baby Whale* is very informative, agreeably illustrated, and has a splendid map showing the whale's travels all over the world. Both of these would please children of 6 to 12 who are interested in Natural History. *Willy Nilly* has a great many very fine penguins, and a moral, which I believe most children like. Miss Flack is also responsible for *William and his Kitten*, which is not so exciting but would be a good present for a domesticated little girl of 4 to 7. The pictures are a little feeble, but Miss Flack knows what children like. For Panda fans there is *The Panda and the Piccaninny* (2-5), a short and easily enjoyed explanation of how the Panda came to look as he does. Also *In His Little Black Waistcoat*, with pretentious and unpleasing pictures. Look out for slop in books which deal with pets rather than wild animals. It is astonishing how much sentimentality oozes from the plain black silhouettes with which Miss Mary Baker illustrates her sister's *The Puppy called Spinach. Buttons* is about life among the tough cats in the alleys. It ends up, frankly snobbish, "He forgot he was an alley cat. He began to look like a gentleman and act like a gentleman. By and by he was a gentleman. *And lived happily ever after.*" The illustrations are more designed for adults than children, but I suspect *Buttons* will have a following.

Poetry is represented by *Merry Meet* (6 to 10), a book of innocuous, rather grown-up verses about a village, and Dr. Seuss's *And to think that I saw it on Mulberry Street*. This has bright and vulgar pictures and is meant to be funny, but as the result of experiments I found that the smiles and giggles only last till half-time. Dr. Seuss is a professor of English literature and a great success with American children. It is rather difficult to know why. My choice among the poets is *Locomotive* (4 to 10) written and illustrated by three Poles. The pictures as well as the verses are poetical. If you see it in a bookshop, turn to the picture of the Birds in Birchwood Grove and see if you do not think it imagination-provoking and magical, rare qualities in modern books. For I fear that in contrast to the illustrations of twenty or thirty years ago, with their mass of faithful and fantastic detail, the present-day picture-book has a scrubbed, hygienic appearance, and the parent who reads aloud to his child may well feel a faint nostalgia for the tinsel and unfunctional attractions of long ago. A modern picture-book, however, which is very strongly to be recommended is *Anybody at Home?* (2 to 5), which consists of lovely pictures of nests, hives and garages, each with a flap which lifts and shows the inmates beneath (birds, bees and cars). By the same artist, *Raffy and the Nine Monkeys* (3 to 7), also has delightful pictures and quite a good story, though more could have been made out of the material. Raffy is a giraffe. An unusual picture-book is called *Chinese Children at Play*, written and illustrated by Yui Shufang. I suggest it as a present for an eccentric or blue-stocking child from 6 to 8, who is not put off by such expressions as "well-matched combatants," "family of good standing" and "characteristic decoration." *The Five Chinese Brothers* is a short and lively story for children of 4 to 6.

Most parents will appreciate a book of short stories, each long enough to be read at bedtime. The best of a not very inspiring bunch is *Tales of the Four Pigs and Brock the Badger*. All the stories are about the same characters, yet each can stand alone and there are pictures which could be chalked or painted. Mumfie is, I believe, a veteran star, and his new adventures in *Mumfie's Uncle Samuel* are as good as ever and full of invention, but it is hard not to be put off by the illustrations, a curious blend of vulgarity and bleak abstraction. The stories in *Nugger Nonsense* are also better than the pictures, which are vulgar and arch. *Ottik's Book of Stories* has pretty pictures and an excellent story sandwiched between two not so good ones. All the above would, I believe, be enjoyed by children of 5 to 8. *The Big Goose and the Little White Duck* must be rejected, because in his effort to write "simple and rhythmic language," the author has made it too muddling to follow.

There is not a witch, not an Ogre, not a crocodile in any of these books—but neither is there a fairy, a mermaid, nor a pair of seven league boots. Luckily *Alice in Wonderland*, Lear's Nonsense Books, and *Little Black Sambo* are still in print. What a pity no one reprints the Golliwog Books. FRANCES BIRD

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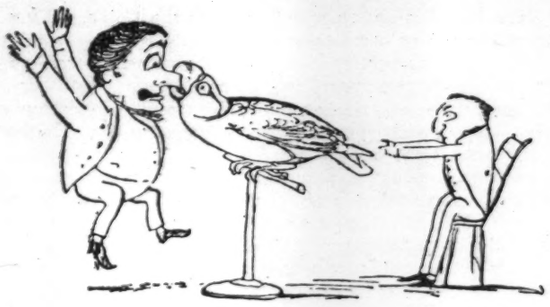

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styled George I) declared that Lady Nithsdale had done him more harm than any woman in Christendom; and so soon as she was able she followed her husband into exile, fleeing rather secretly from Terregles and the spacious Scottish life she loved to the impecunious, bickering loyalists in Paris, and, later, in Rome. She was a prodigious correspondent, and by publishing the bulk of her letters to her husband's sister, Lady Traquair (letters found at Traquair House in 1862 "scattered among bundles of rubbish in an old trunk, as well as in heaps of trash which the old housekeeper brought in her apron"), Miss Henrietta Tayler has done both Lady Nithsdale's memory and modern students of eighteenth-century manners a very great service. She reprints Lady Nithsdale's own narrative of the escape (written to her sister, Lucy Herbert, many years after) and of her famous journey through the December snows from Scotland to London, attended only by her maid and mostly done on horseback, but far the larger and the most interesting, if distressing, part of the book deals with the Jacobite court at Rome, splendid yet petty, rigid with threadbare etiquette, and noisy with the perpetual gossip of unpaid pensions and unwanted confinements. It is the less spectacular aspects of Lady Nithsdale's heroic cast of mind that are emphasised in these drab years of almost insupportable poverty in Italy. Her husband, the chief of her trials (though none the less she dutifully adored him) was garrulous and a spendthrift, drawing ceaselessly on his brother-in-law's credit for large sums, and squalidly concealing the fact from his wife, who came in for the blame. The measure of his ungraciousness is best indicated by the family tradition that he never forgave Lady Nithsdale for his escape, having an utterly unwarranted but utterly fixed belief that he would have been pardoned by King George. But it is not only the Nithsdales who figure in this book. Winifrede Herbert's father, created Duke of Powis by James II, and her elegant mother (the devoted friend of Mary Beatrice) had in all five daughters, who are shown as girls in a charming group painted on the ceiling of the library at Powis Castle, young goddesses seated amongst clouds. Of these five, three at least, Winifrede, Lucy and Anne, grew up to be remarkable women. Anne married a very elderly peer, Lord Carrington, and on his death spent a great part of his fortune in tampering in those Dumas-esque intrigues by which the Jacobite ladies did so much harm to the Cause. When she had lost the rest of her money in John Law's failure, Lady Carrington took to travelling in Spain with her yet more eccentric niece, Lady Mary Herbert, trying to finance the working of a silver mine. She was never an unselfish woman, and at her most opulent she did practically nothing for her sister, Lady Nithsdale, though towards the end of her life she wrote her long friendly letters, part possibly of a scheme to persuade King James to bestow the very odd title of Duchess of Herbert on her niece. Lucy, the third sister, early entered the enclosed order of Augustinian canonesses at Bruges, and becoming its prioress rebuilt much of the convent in imitation of Powis Castle. Miss Tayler, who is more at home than most of us in the fervid, cryptographic atmosphere in which the Jacobite plotters moved, has wisely let these three ladies speak mainly for themselves. One could wish, though, that there was more of Lady Carrington who, if not strictly admirable, was evidently the most entertaining of the three.

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Hitler in Bohemia, the Near East is not menaced by Germany, that is only because it is menaced by Russia instead. Everyone who has studied the rivalry between England and Russia over Persia in the years that led up to 1914, knows that the Russian threat to India was serious already. In the early 1920s, when it was not serious, English people made perhaps even more fuss about it, because it could be used to work up anti-Communist feeling. Now again the threat is real, for Stalin has been militarising Russia's natural resources and reviving the dreams of Peter the Great. If Stalinist Russia gains control of the Balkans and of the strategical spearhead of Bohemia, then Russia will be so far master of Europe to be free to turn southwards, and the rest of our days will very likely be consumed in a really desperate and disunited struggle.

Since that seems to be the outlook, everyone who wants to understand this odd sort of war must be needing a reliable guide-book to the Near East and a reliable guide-book to the Balkans. *Hitler's Route to Bagdad* answers this need very imperfectly. The function of a book like this is to make available for reference the *data* of a political problem, the knowledge required to make the news intelligible; but all intelligent readers of political books must expect to bring them up to date for themselves. The fact, therefore, that the Russian seizure of Galicia has happened since this book was written does not seriously diminish its value; but that some parts of it are inaccurate diminishes its value very much indeed. Miss Hollingworth's chapter on Bulgaria gives accurately and in a plain style just the right amount of detail. Mr. Robinson's chapter on Greece is informative and reliable, and so is Miss Linke's on Turkey, though rather heavy in style. But Miss Ward's on Jugoslavia gives us, instead of an impartial guide, an interesting but unconvincing *apologia* for Stojadinović. Did Stojadinović "liberalise the press laws"? The laws, maybe, but not the treatment of the press. Miss Ward deals well with King Alexander's dictatorship and with the troubles of a peasant economy, but superficially with Radić. She blames Maček for visiting neither Prince Paul, Stojadinović nor Korošec when he visited Belgrade in August, 1938, forgetting that not they but the Serb Opposition had invited him. And her spelling of Serb and Croat names, which often is neither the original spelling nor a correct phonetic transcription, is a serious defect in a work of reference. As for the chapter on Roumania, it gives the number of Roumanians living in Ruthenia as "between 20,000 and 40,000," although the Czechoslovak census gives it as 14,170, and although many fled from the Hungarian terror between March and August. Without comment, it says that there are 80,000 Germans in the Bukovina and 80,000 in Bessarabia, although the Roumanians admit (or claim) that there are 90,000 and 110,000, respectively. To suggest that a British bicycle factory be set up in Roumania seems absurd to one who has travelled a good deal on Roumanian roads: even if credits for road-making were also given, they would have to be huge. To pretend that anything can excuse the electoral alliance which Maniu made with the Iron Guard shows poor judgment. The suggestion that Beneš rejected definitely the idea of a Baltic-Aegean *bloc* is misleading, and so is the statement that he "preferred to confine the [Little] Entente to Hungary's immediate neighbours." And there is no analysis of Titulescu's foreign policy, no statement of the reasons why he fell. Finally, Mr. Horrabin's maps are too simple for so detailed a book: that of Roumania leaves out the Germans of Bessarabia and the Jews of the Bukovina! In short, *Hitler's Route to Bagdad* gives useful accounts of Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey, but its treatment of Roumania and Jugoslavia compares badly with Elizabeth Wiskemann's *Undeclared War*.

Minaret and Pipeline is an outstanding achievement, a really adequate one-volume survey of the Near East. It covers Turkey, Iran, Arabia, Iraq, Syria, the Hatay, Palestine, Transjordan, the Persian Gulf and the Caucasus. On each of them Dr. Boveri brings to bear imagination as well as shrewd judgment, completing her analysis of the strategical, economic and political factors with keen descriptions of the peoples and their ways of life. And besides taking the countries one by one, she brings out the factors they share: there is a sketch of the general differences between the Near East and Europe, a fascinating short history of the whole Near East and of its religious sects, a detailed account of the struggle to find and to exploit oil, an evaluation of Pan-Arabism and Pan-Islamism, etc. Here, then, is one essential guide to the war that is beginning.

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Unto Caesar. By F. A. VOIGT. *Constable.* 5s. (Cheap Edition).

Light on Moscow. By D. N. PRITT. *Penguin Special.* 6d.

Since the last war the opinions of most English Socialists about the U.S.S.R. have gone through four main phases. Up to 1936, they felt that the Revolution represented the emancipation of the Russian people from an intolerable tyranny, that it had laid the foundations of Socialism and was a land of promise, even though they saw reason to criticise much of the unnecessary cruelty and repression associated with Stalinism. The famine of 1932-3, the mass tragedy involved in collectivising the farms in five instead of fifty years and the continued repression of all intellectual freedom shook the faith of many Socialists. But in 1935 there was a moment when there was reason to hope that the regime was now sufficiently certain of itself and the economic transformation sufficiently advanced to make real progress towards freedom possible; there were signs that Stalin was listening to Gorki and others, who urged that the time had come when political and intellectual freedom might gradually be adopted in Russia. Russia had some measure of security; the time had come to fight the battle for civil rights which always has to be fought after every revolutionary epoch.

The second period began with the murder of Kirov and Stalin's decision to reverse Lenin's old maxim that Party members should never be executed for political differences or failures. The purges during 1936 and 1937 became fanatical; the confessions, the wholesale delation and the murder of leaders of the Red Army and of many of the tried and sincere revolutionaries were proof of nothing but Stalin's almost insane fear of opposition. Those of us who denounced these purges which have swept away tens of thousands of loyal Socialists and at the same time refused to give up hope of future Socialist development in the U.S.S.R., were denounced by the Communists as Trotskyites, disguised Fascists and all the rest of it. In the middle of this controversy came the Spanish War. Whatever Stalin's policy was at home, it seemed clear that he was a genuine opponent of Fascism in Europe, which was the greatest danger to democracy and civilisation in the West. The U.S.S.R. did in fact give practical aid to Spain and China. Hitler was clearly contemplating the domination of Europe and we were not deceived into believing that the attack was solely or even primarily directed against the U.S.S.R. Indeed, Goebbels had made it plain that the Nazi philosophy was directed against all the "principles of 1789," that is, against the conceptions of liberty, equality and internationalism, which are at the root of our civilisation and which are the basis, theoretically at least, of the philosophy of Communism. We might feel that the revolution had "gone wrong" in many respects in Russia, but the U.S.S.R. still appeared to be a Power without expansionist ambitions and prepared to help against the Hitler menace which was increasingly dominating our lives. Therefore, in the third period, we fought for a "peace front" which would include the U.S.S.R. At the same time it was clear that the Government of the Western Powers would never willingly co-operate with Russia. The implications of Munich were that Hitler should be free to expand as much as he desired in the East and at the expense of her smaller neighbours and ultimately of the Soviet Union. In the later stages of the struggle, however, the danger from Germany was so acute that Conservatives like Mr. Churchill were as insistent as the Labour Party on the need for an Anglo-Soviet Pact. It was clear that the National Government finally considered such a pact only as the result of the pressure of public opinion since, without it, the guarantee to Poland necessarily meant war. Then came the fourth period of the Russian-German Alliance, culminating in the present invasion of Finland.

These three books are all commentaries on Anglo-Russian relations. Mr. Voigt's book is a passionate analysis of Hitlerism and Stalinism, which he regards with equal abhorrence and with which he contrasts the liberty and decency of Western civilisation. It is a profoundly religious book. In the new preface to the third edition he writes that he is convinced that the war and the crisis which preceded it were:

> a judgment that has come upon us because of our disobedience to the First Commandment. I am convinced that we have an ultimate responsibility for the Crisis—and the War—because we have disregarded and continue to disregard the limitations set on all human endeavour by striving to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.

I know of no book which better summarises the essential barbarism of the Nazi regime and no book which expresses with more bitter hatred the Christian's detestation of Godless Russia. Mr. Voigt writes not only as a Western Christian; he writes as a fanatic to whom Stalin and Hitler are both cast for the role of the devil. Anyone who ever said anything which might even indirectly help either the Bolshevik or the Nazi regime is as anathema to Mr. Voigt as the devil's accomplice. There are times when the book reaches an hysterical pitch. So far do Mr. Voigt's views take him that he was able to see in Poland a powerful and strong bulwark against the barbarian; he regards as dangerous Utopians those who supported a policy of collective security, though when war is actually menaced he naturally is forced to look for all possible allies against the enemy. Yet no one could read Mr. Voigt's book and still hope to persuade him that collective security was, on its defensive side, merely the proposal to build the necessary alliance in time to prevent the war or at least to finish it quickly if it came! That was Utopianism and as wicked as the surely prudent and statesmanlike effort to prevent the partnership of Hitler and Stalin which he was one of the first to prophecy. Ideologically, Mr. Voigt must now be very happy because he sees Britain and France locked in a struggle with two Powers of Evil. Personally, in the interests of the Western civilisation which, like Mr. Voigt, I regard as important, I hope we still have only one devil to fight. Mr. Voigt's book is a contribution to ideological controversy which he professes to despise; its only contribution to the difficult art of politics is to recommend the permanent dismemberment of Germany, which is to be forever kept in order by French bayonets. It is not many years since Mr. Voigt was one of the most brilliant and bitter opponents of this policy at a time when the League was still powerful and France had an overwhelming superiority in bayonets.

Mr. Pritt's little book is an ably written piece of special pleading for the Soviet Union. He presents the case against British Governments which ever since the last war have attempted to isolate the U.S.S.R., and he deals in some detail with the Moscow negotiations between March and August. He assumes that the difficulties came wholly from Britain. Mr. Pritt's case is very simply built on the assumption that since the U.S.S.R. is a Socialist country, it must be right and that all Socialists must support it. It was written after the German-Russian agreement, but before Stalin showed signs of expansionist ambitions. It is now a useful corrective for those who rush to the opposite extreme and assume that co-operation with Russia was always wicked or impossible.

If we believe Mr. Krivitsky, Stalin never meant to co-operate with the Western Powers, even when the U.S.S.R. joined the League of Nations in 1934. He speaks with some authority since he served for fourteen years in the Soviet Military Intelligence Department and was chief of this department in Western Europe from 1935 until November, 1937, when he broke with Stalin after the purge of Tukhachevsky and other Red Army leaders. After such a career, one must make allowance for the bitterness of the disillusioned fanatic. Krivitsky describes how he was increasingly troubled by the course of events in Russia and like so many Soviet sympathisers outside the U.S.S.R. continued to do his job, assuring himself that at any rate he was on the right side and that Soviet Russia was the best hope of the world. His reaction has led him to some statements that can scarcely be substantiated. Surely it is naïve to suggest that the need for gold was one of the main reasons for Stalin's export of arms to Spain? It is a fact that the U.S.S.R. insisted on cash payment for everything supplied to the Spanish Government, but this can hardly have weighed heavily with Stalin, since Russia is one of the world's greatest gold producers. Similarly, I think he over-simplifies matters when he insists that Stalin was always determined on the German Alliance and that all the rest was bluff or a bargaining weapon. It may well be that Stalin was, as Mr. Krivitsky suggests, immensely impressed with Hitler as a strong and ruthless man and decided, after June 30th, 1934, that he must somehow come to terms with him. But I suspect that Stalin like the head of every other European government has had two policies, one publicly pursued and a second in reserve if the first failed. I see no reason to doubt that he would have co-operated with France and Britain if they had really wished for

Russian help, and been prepared to bargain for it as they were for a Nazi agreement, but it may well be that he has always been dubious of any such co-operation and thought that the German partnership was better for the Soviet Union. Most of Mr. Krivitsky's book is a horrifying account of the murders and double-crossings of the G.P.U. agents and of the Stalin terror. Some of them are corroborated by the accounts of Mr. Louis Fischer, who has lived long in Russia and who watched at close quarters the Spanish events which Mr. Krivitsky describes. It appears to be true that anyone who has served Stalin in any important position stands in danger of his life. It is dangerous to know too much in the Soviet Union, dangerous for agents who have carried out Stalin's orders to return to the Soviet Union, and dangerous, in brief, to have any political opinions or individuality or public office under Stalin. Mr. Krivitsky's account of the technique of obtaining "confessions" confirms others that I have received. He emphasises in particular a point that is not easily understood by a British reader. A life-long Communist may, it appears, be finally prevailed upon to confess to a pack of inventions on the ground that his death as a traitor is the last service he can do to the government and regime which he has served and which now demands his life. It is a strange form of devotion, but not one that stands alone in the history of religious movements.

I wish I could dismiss Mr. Krivitsky's book as mere fiction, designed to please a public brought up on Phillips Oppenheim and Mrs. Nesta Webster. There is only too much evidence that some of it is true. The Communists' reply to such charges is always twofold. They say first that all attacks on Stalin are a lot of Trotskyist and Fascist lies, invented to discredit the Soviet Union. Secondly, they justify wholesale executions and ruthless cruelty, on the ground that in the defence of Stalin and the Soviet Union the end justifies the most barbaric means. The result of the second method of defence is to discredit the first. But in saying so much I wish to add a word of caution. The Russian revolution has passed into the Napoleonic stage and it is easy for disillusioned idealists to make the mistake made by Utopian thinkers after the French Revolution. The social impetus of the French Revolution remained and worked good in the world for generations after the idealism of its early days in France had died in Napoleon's bloody wars. So in the twentieth century the Russian Revolution and the essential truths for which it stood will live on in spite of Stalin.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

TWO FRENCH THINKERS

Prophet of the Mass Age: Alexis de Tocqueville. By J. P. MAYER. *Dent.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Montesquieu and English Politics: 1750-1800. By F. T. H. FLETCHER. *Arnold.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Both Tocqueville and Montesquieu belong, I fear, to that category of classics whom everyone praises and no one reads. It is a pity, for not only have they both the merit of profundity; they are also thoroughly interesting. Both, in some degree, have paid the penalty of having said so well what they had to say, that their ideas have become part of the central tradition of our thought, and we almost forget that what seem to be truisms now—at least outside the totalitarian States—were once deeply original thoughts. Montesquieu has high claims to be regarded as the real founder of sociological jurisprudence; and Tocqueville saw more prophetically than any thinker of the nineteenth century, except Marx, into the implications for politicals of large-scale industrialisation. There is still no better explanation of Mr. Roosevelt's New Deal than his *Democracy in America*. Messrs. Dent, incidentally, could render us a great service by reprinting it in the Everyman Library.

Mr. Mayer's book is a careful portrait of the man built upon a full knowledge of his writings. No better introduction to Tocqueville exists than this except his own works. It is always clear and usually convincing, though I think that some of the distinctions Mr. Mayer seeks to establish are rather the outcome of terminological distinctions than of differences of substance. He stresses less than I should do what I take to have been Tocqueville's practical failure as a man of affairs, and makes his sympathies rather wider than in fact they were. Nor does he emphasise adequately, I think, the disillusion that is a central note in all Tocqueville's work. Much of it, before 1848, was conditioned by the belief that 1789 went wrong, and most of it, after 1848, by a deep sense of the failure which the *coup d'état* implies. The very remarkable *Autobiography* is the clue to the whole, and I do not think Mr. Mayer has made all the use of it that he could. But he has written a really interesting volume, made the more significant by the fact that he sees the profound relevance of Tocqueville's prophecies to the grim events of our own time. It is a very useful book which should revive interest in a great man who tends to be forgotten.

Mr. Fletcher's volume is a very scholarly piece of work which will, I fear, interest the specialist rather than the general reader. He has successfully gleaned from both the central and the peripheral literature of the time the evidence of Montesquieu's impact, and shown, I think, conclusively, that it was both widespread and profound. The book is well written and maintains—what is often difficult in works of this kind—a proper sense of proportion. Some of Mr. Fletcher's claims for Montesquieu are, I believe, excessive; it goes far beyond the mark, for instance, to attribute to him and Beccaria the main credit for mitigating the harsh severity of criminal law. Nor is there any real evidence for his view that Montesquieu was the creator of political economy; dates in these matters are stubborn things which cannot be conjured away by enthusiasm for one's subject. And some of the men whose relation to Montesquieu Mr. Fletcher discusses at length are hardly worth the care he has spent on them; Adam Ferguson, I suspect, was little more than an elegant manner, and William Paley is, save for one admirable paragraph, pretty second-rate stuff. I suspect, too, that some of the things Mr. Fletcher attributes to Montesquieu's influence are due to conditions which produced the need for similar ideas to his. But these are small matters. His book will be valuable in making that really first-rate study of Montesquieu which has long been over due. It is good to find the "Departments of Language and Literature" moving over into that hinterland where life and literature meet. One day, its outcome may be the breakdown of the artificial boundaries which exist in our university curricula. For only as specialism understands how to relate its particularity to the structure of the universe can it cease to be a danger to understanding. Universities have deformed too many minds by confining them within a space too narrow for a vision of the horizon to be possible. The discoveries are made at the boundaries of subjects and not at their centres.

HAROLD J. LASKI

BONAPARTE IN ITALY

The Gamble. By GUGLIELMO FERRERO. Translated by BERTHA PRITCHARD and LILY FREEMAN. *Bell.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

When people talk of the "benefits" which despotism has conferred upon Italy, I often silently reckon to the debit account the loss of the greatest of living Italian historians. A lover of truth like Guglielmo Ferrero could not breathe the atmosphere of falsehood. Fortunately, there was a country which was able and willing to provide him a refuge; and in Switzerland he has been permitted to continue his work—which has indeed gained in power by a certain tacit reference, in its accounts of the past, to the events of the present.

Exile is not Ferrero's only grief. His son Leo was "destined to take part in the great struggle against the barbarians who beset civilisation." *Dis aliter visum;* and Leo was attended to the grave by his friend, his father's best disciple, Pierre Jeanneret. These two had helped in the making of the present volume.

No more revolutionary book has been written for many years: it will compel historians to revise their opinions wholesale. Who does not recall the picture of the young general, at the head of a starving and ragged army, who, sundering the Piedmontese and the Austrians by miraculous marches, defeated each in turn, and then presented Sardinia at Cherasco with his ultimatum? "I may often lose a battle, but shall never lose two minutes." This, alas, is a myth. The allies, as Ferrero shows, were *not* sundered; but Sardinia was weary of the war; a party had long been anxious to find an excuse for terminating it; and leapt at the opportunity provided by Dego and Montenotte, indecisive as in themselves those battles were.

Who, again, does not know how, as victory succeeded victory, Bonaparte assumed more and more audaciously the rôle of a master, ignored the Directory, and settled the affairs of Italy as if he had been an Alexander after Arbela? This too is entirely imaginary. Bonaparte was the most obedient of generals. Almost every step he took, in his dealings with the duchies, with the Pope, with the owners of picture-galleries, was in accord with the instructions of the Directory; and even some of the details of his military operations were dictated from Paris. He was ordered

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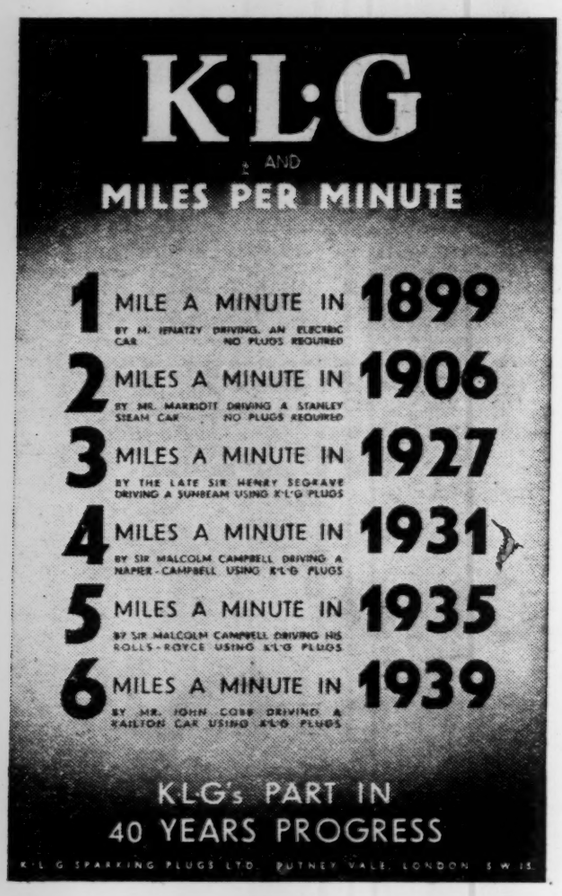
to take the fortress of Ceva without using siege-artillery; and this great commander, primarily an artillery officer, tried to do so, and suffered a bloody repulse. Fortunately, for a reason which can only be guessed, Colli evacuated Ceva during the night, and the Napoleonic legend started on its widening way. As a matter of fact, in the whole campaign down to the Preliminaries of Léoben, Napoleon "knew his place," and did what he was told. This is established by Ferrero from the archives, and cannot, it appears, be denied.

We next turn to what Ferrero calls the "spirit of adventure"—the application of the principle that war must be totalitarian, and must be made to support itself. This, as all know, was a result of the French Revolution, a reversion to the methods of Attila and Alboin. Gone were the days of warfare as regulated by Vattel. No longer would an army surrender because it had no money with which to hire boats in order to cross a river. A school of tacticians had arisen which studied Guibert's *Essai Général*—a work whose importance has been revealed by our own military expert, Captain Liddell Hart. It was the Bible of Frederick the Great, "a book," said Napoleon, "that should make great men." Mobility was to be everything; all the traditions were to be violated; December was to be regarded as no less favourable a campaigning-month than June.

It is usual to despise the old system; and to this day wars are carried on in accordance with Guibertian principles, adapted to modern conditions. But there is much to be said on the other side; and few pages, even in this epoch-making work, are more instructive than those in which Ferrero, with a side-glance at modern war, shows the defects of totalitarian militarism. "The Revolution and the world, dazzled by early successes, forgot the profound and obscure truth from which the warfare of the eighteenth century deduced its principles and rules—that the supremacy of spirit over matter is complicated by dependence." The old methods may well return, as totalitarian war overreaches itself. "Who overcomes by force," says Milton's Satan, "hath overcome but half his foe"; and Satan is here putting his case mildly. Even Napoleon's Italian campaign illustrates this truth. Advancing far into Austria, the conqueror found himself at a deadlock, in which returning was as tedious as go o'er; and he was constrained to sue for a peace which he endeavoured (with success) to seem to be imposing. With plundered Italy behind him, and incalculable dangers before him, he had no choice. At Campo Formio, which his histrionic genius proclaimed as a dazzling triumph, "vanquished" Austria received more than the victor gained. Yet the phantom of glory has deluded even students ever since.

Professor Ferrero rightly called his book *The Gamble;* for the whole Italian campaign was a mere throw of the dice, which, by a combination of circumstances, appeared to turn out fortunately, and which, in the manner of adventurers, Napoleon himself regarded as decided by skill. It led him on to further adventures, successively more and more reckless. From the Peace of Campo Formio sprang not only the later Austrian and Russian wars and the Spanish imbroglio, but some of the gambles of our own times. Though, in lucid moments, Napoleon recognised that the "imponderables," in the long run, weigh most heavily in war, he yet trusted in force, and, even when force utterly failed, dwelt with a strange pleasure on the excitement of the *grand jeu*, the fascination of staking one's all on a single cast. The catastrophe of 1814 was but the natural, if belated, sequel of 1796. The story of that sequel Professor Ferrero hopes to tell in a subsequent volume, to the appearance of which we shall eagerly look forward.

E. E. KELLETT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A LAY THEOLOGIAN

The Descent of the Dove: A Short History of the Holy Spirit in the Church. By CHARLES WILLIAMS. *Longmans.* 7s. 6d.

This book is not quite what you might expect it to be; but nothing by Mr. Charles Williams—nothing, at least, that he has written because he wanted to—ever is; and the sort of people who would object that Proteus does not observe the rules of all-in wrestling, the very literal-minded, may sometimes complain of Mr. Williams that he is playing a game of his own. The easiest way to try to prove a foul is to accuse Mr. Williams of heresy. To those who believe that orthodoxy is for the Church to determine, not for the individual writer to expect to arrive at until his views have been published and tested, this will not appear a deadly accusation. One may even go so far as to maintain that a heresy from Mr. Williams would be, in its result (and Mr. Williams does assume that intelligent and educated minds exist), a real contribution to the explication of orthodoxy.

Of three classes of Mr. Williams's writings: his romantic thrillers, from *War in Heaven* to *Descent into Hell*, his later poetry, and his theological works (*He came down from Heaven* and the present book) it may be said that while they can all be enjoyed separately, they can only be partly understood unless they are considered together. Even Mr. Williams himself, in his preface, seems to be aware of this. *Taliessin through Logres* contained some beautiful poetry, but some of the most obscure poetry that was ever written: it becomes more intelligible after reading *The Descent of the Dove*. The obscurity of the poem was partly inevitable, because the author's subject matter was difficult in itself, and difficult particularly for the present age to apprehend; it was partly innocent; but also it seemed partly wilful. There is an element of wilfulness in Mr. Williams's expression—a temptation to which anyone is exposed who is trying to convey the beauty of colour to the colour-blind. It is necessary, in any case, to collate what are superficially different kinds of work, in order to see what Mr. Williams is about; and even then, it is very difficult to classify this extraordinary and eccentric spiritual acrobat. One may say that the centre of Mr. Williams's interest is mystical or ascetical theology: in the widest sense—for *He came down from Heaven* contains some profound remarks on Romantic Love and the *Vita Nuova*. But he enjoys all the privileges of being a *lay* theologian; he can use his own form, such as that of thrillers as thrilling as any, and he can speak in the language of contemporary conversation. Indeed, it may prove that one of his greatest contributions to his science is a refreshment of the terminology in which it is expressed.

The sub-title of the present book indicates that it is in a certain sense a history of the Church. It is not, of course, a history of ecclesiastical politics or constitution. To the reader who is not interested in, or does not recognise the identity of the Holy Ghost, the book is still very interesting, as a kind of review of the points of emphasis which Mr. Williams considers important in the last nineteen hundred years: to such a reader the book will be interest-

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ing as a survey of Mr. Williams's mind. Such a reader will enjoy the review and appreciate the many good things by the way, but he will have missed the author's intention, which is to chronicle the points of crisis and decision, at which the Church (in its widest sense) has been guided by the Holy Spirit. That is to say, Mr. Williams would wish his book to be judged, not as his "personal" impression of the history of the Church, but as an essay according to criteria quite as objective as those of the ordinary historian. His standpoint is certainly not Protestant, but it is Catholic in a larger sense than that usually attributed by Protestants to Catholicism, for it allows him to consider without prejudice the contributions of heretics and schismatics, as well as those of saints and popes. Popes, indeed, have no very conspicuous place as individuals in this book, for they are not here important as occasional "great men" in the affairs of the world, but as more or less satisfactory vehicles of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand Mr. Williams's scheme allows him scope to give full value to the contribution of Montaigne, in a chapter called "The Quality of Disbelief":

> It was a quality of spirit, not clarity (though it may involve clarity), not charity (though it may lead to charity). It is a rare thing, and it may be called the quality of disbelief. It is a manner, a temperament, a nature, which may be encouraged or discouraged; it is most particularly not irony, though irony may be an element in it. It is a qualitative mode of belief rather than a quantitative denial of dogma.

This is well said: it is a difficult saying to a positivistic age. One of Mr. Williams's most remarkable virtues of sensibility, in fact, is a capacity for understanding certain modes of feeling which have become extinct. It is a pleasure to find that this capacity of his operates on Montaigne as well as on Dante. In speaking of this "quality of disbelief" as exemplified by Lorenzo Valla, he says

> Such a method has the same dangers as any other; that is, it is quite sound when a master uses it, cheapens as it becomes popular, and is unendurable when it is merely fashionable. So Augustine's predestination was safe with him, comprehensible in Calvin, tiresome in the English Puritans, and quite horrible in the Scottish presbyteries. There is no way of saving these things; even Francis of Assisi has produced, unintentionally, circles of hopeless bathos. All that we can hope is that we may, by grace, recover different modes as and when they are most needed. This particular one was needed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Our Lord the Spirit, having permitted contrition to exist, permitted sheer intelligence to exist; he inspired—one may say so—Montaigne.

This passage illustrates both Mr. Williams's perceptiveness, and his tendency to be balanced and just; and, incidentally, his unconventional phraseology, in which also one observes no tiresome intention of paradox.

Whether there are any historical errors in this History of the Holy Spirit in the Church, the present reviewer is incompetent to detect: but he is sure that, if there are, they are not of importance. It might be easier to find omissions. The later history of the Eastern Church receives no attention, nor does the mysticism of Eckhart and his followers (though Boehme is mentioned for his influence upon William Law). But such omissions Mr. Williams would probably be able to justify or extenuate. He gives St. John of the Cross his due place, and the suggestion of the importance of the Great Schism in preparing a way for schism in the sixteenth century gives matter for much reflection. This is not only a valuable book, but a very readable one for those who consider themselves outside of the Church as well as for those in it; and it has a further use in that it provides a helpful introduction to the earlier books of the same author, which have been mentioned.

T. S. ELIOT

THE LEARNED MAN

English Scholars. By DAVID C. DOUGLAS. *Cape.* 15s.

The history of History is an obscure and fascinating study. Every age, of course, tends to see the past in its own image, and the spirit of Pope's *Iliad* is as different from Gawin Douglas' as the hexameter is from the heroic couplet. But history has the advantage over literature in resting on absolute foundations, and each addition to the body of established fact makes tendentious interpretation one degree the more difficult. Philemon Holland could dress up the Caesars in doublet and tournament armour; the best we can do to-day is to lend them the odder psychoses. In certain periods the historian is preoccupied with the accumulation of direct evidence, and all the ingenious generalisations of succeeding writers cannot decay the fruits of his infinite researches. The archivist and archaeologist are the craftsmen of history: the moles' burrowings make the bird's-eye view possible.

English Scholars examines one of the most prolific of these ages of historical research, the seventy years following the Restoration. The same short period saw Hearne, Hickes, Rymer, Madox, Dugdale, Wharton and Brady; and produced the *Monasticon*, the *Foedera*, the Harleian Catalogue, the first great Anglo-Saxon dictionary, and the first serious studies of Anglo-Norman England. More important, these scholars suppressed their predilection for "any old story that looks gay," and began to pay attention to collation of sources, palaeography, and linguistic criticism. The study of the past, in short, became a science, and history began to assume its modern shape. The historians of the time were enthusiasts, in the eighteenth century sense. For most of them history was still a part of politics and religion, and they used their enormous erudition to confound and fustigate their ideological enemies. Unlike certain later writers, however, they were sufficiently sure of themselves to believe that the truth would help their cause; and whether their avowed intent was to prove the Saxon Church's independence of Rome, or to demonstrate historically the rightness of obedience to monarchy, they never suppressed and seldom distorted their findings. At heart, too, they loved learning more than their beliefs, and George Hickes, who ruined his career by obstinately refusing the oath to William III, continued to assist (and was assisted by) scholars of the opposite persuasion while he was proscribed and in hiding. Perhaps because there was little intelligent light reading, the age was a passionately intellectual one, and historical erudition preoccupied the curious mind more than did economics a few years ago. The scholar was not yet an arid or sublimated recluse, and might plunge into politics or debauchery, stoically watch the amputation of his own leg "without one distortion or ho," or compare the pleasures of research work to "that of Wrestling with a fine Woman" without appearing in any way paradoxical. Learning was not a specialised occupation but a simple-minded obsession. "I continually meet with most signal instances of this Thy Providence," noted Thomas Hearne in his private prayers, "and one act yesterday when I unexpectedly met with three old MSS., for which in a particular manner I return my thanks." Scholarship was not confined to professionals, and

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small country gentlemen used to meet to discuss their ancient muniments. Even dilettantism was not free from the *furor scholasticus*, and Anthony Wood was forbidden to live in Merton for fear he should pull it down in search of antiquities.

On the whole, the scholar worked under highly favourable conditions. Material difficulties were often immense—a large part of the public records, for instance, lay catastrophically piled in mildewed cellars, and to consult the only complete copy of *Doomsday* required a fee of six and eightpence, with fourpence extra for each line copied. Patronage, on the other hand, was lavishly and intelligently extended not only by individual noblemen, such as Harley, but semi-officially by the leading ecclesiastics. Any able antiquary who was prepared to trim in moderation could hope for a librarianship or an easy living, and the system of pluralities that corrupted the eighteenth century Church provided the seventeenth-century learned with tactful and dignified pensions. One meets, occasionally, with traditional Grub Street squalor (Professor Douglas quotes a horribly Hogarthian description of Rymer in his hovel surrounded by nagging wife and daughters, with a torn MS. on the table and a full jordan beneath the bed), but, generally speaking, the learned had an easy time of it; and a vast Latin folio on Icelandic derivations could obtain the subscriptions of half the fashionable world. In the eighteenth century the scene changes, for the age that praised the virtues of doubt derided detailed research. Wit and generalisation displaced particular erudition in popular favour, and studious antiquaries came to be regarded as "men of a Low unpolite genius, fit only for the Rough and *Barbarick* part of learning." The dark ages fell into disrepute, and Walpole could openly wish that Gibbon "had never heard of the Monophysites or Nestorians or any such fools." But though the work of the Mediaevalists was ignored it could not be destroyed, and their tireless compilations made easier the revival of serious research in the nineteenth century.

English Scholars is a competent and stimulating guide-book to its unfamiliar subject. Professor Douglas confines himself largely to the scholastic careers of his characters, and though we should like to hear more of the private lives of such men as Sparkes, who was "mad a quarter of a year together in every year," or of Wanley, who married on his deathbed "a very young creature who had been his whore," he has wisely refrained from competition with Lytton Strachey or Anthony Wood. Occasionally his personal judgments seem a trifle suspect—it is hardly fair to observe that Aubrey "came up to Oxford with his head full of gossip and scandal," and dismiss the *Brief Lives* as merely "salacious and entertaining." But in general his book is succinct, acute and authoritative, and written with a fervour that its subjects would have been the first to admire.

JOHN MAIR

BARBAROUS WALES

Welsh Life in the Eighteenth Century. By SIR LEONARD TWISTON DAVIES and AVERYL EDWARDS. *Country Life.* 15s.

Inland from Aberystwyth, near tourist-ridden Devil's Bridge, is a sublime valley of trees. The trees were planted by Thomas Johnes at the close of the eighteenth century on the slopes of the strange green mountains of this part of Wales, mountains whose outlines swell sometimes in wide curves, and here and there have satisfactory blunt points. Thomas Johnes was Lord Lieutenant of Cardiganshire, sat in Parliament, was a soldier and an admirable landlord. He was intelligent enough to commission Nash, long before he was famous, to build an octagon library to house his magnificent books that he collected at his house here at Hafod. He was the translator of Froissart and Monstrelet, which he printed at his private press. He was the friend and patron of good architects and artists, famous or not. Banks, Baldwyn of Bath, Rogers stayed at Hafod. Possibly Handel also. Certainly Turner painted it. (There is an elaborate water-colour of it by him in the Port Sunlight Art Gallery.) When the house was burned to the ground in 1807, with all that was in it, Johnes set about rebuilding it better, and collecting a new and grander library—the remains of which were dispersed this year.

In decay, as in its glory, Johnes' creation appears as one of the most beautifully developed estates in the British Isles. Its knots of interest among the woods, gardens and artificial landscape features, are half-hidden in a manner that Peacock's Mr. Milestone would have been forced to approve. To-day most of them are overgrown and unvisited: there are gorges blasted through rock, moss walks through groves, and a tunnel giving on to an impressive cascade and whirlpool. Two delicate archways by Nash, with Coad Stone heads of Adam and Eve (not one, as the present authors say, repeating a small error in John Summerson's biography) lead into a tangled garden that hides beneath its laurels a broken stone serpent. Elsewhere are hidden Gothic arches, a decaying Nash footbridge and a Soane-like obelisk on a wooded height.

Johnes in many ways resembled Beckford, and is interesting as a phenomenal Welsh product of the period. By his single existence he blasts the apparently conclusive stories of illiterate squires domineering over a half-baked population in a country bereft of roads and all other decencies, which English travellers of the time, and later, perpetuated for our imaginations to work on.

The other side of the picture is given in a pleasantly prejudiced letter, dated 1799, written by Sion Williams, son of one of the early Methodist pioneers, and quoted in the book:

> What was the condition of Anglesey with regard to religion, godliness, and morality before the recent Methodist revival broke out in it is not hard to answer; the common people (except one in a thousand) had no more knowledge than the wild creatures of the Mountains; they delighted in nothing except empty sport and carnal pleasures. . . . No wonder the Angleseyites were once called *Swine*; it is a wonder they were not called *Bears*, or *Lions*. Within the last sixty years there has been many an entire parish in Anglesey, where not one single inhabitant could read one single letter in a book; and not one in a thousand who saw the least necessity for such an accomplishment.

In the chapter on "Religion, Education and Politics" there is a useful summary of the lives of Welsh religious reformers, the authors insisting that the re-evangelising of Wales was the work of individuals, not of a movement. The method of separate biographies building up a story works well here, but elsewhere it makes for dullness. A little more information about Richard Wilson's short relations with the Welsh landscape would have been more valuable than the D.N.B.-ish biography of him in the chapter on Art. But on the whole, the authors are good on personalities and not so good on things. The remarkable architecture of hundreds of the earlier Welsh chapels they dismiss in a line and a half. They display no nostalgia at all for the con-

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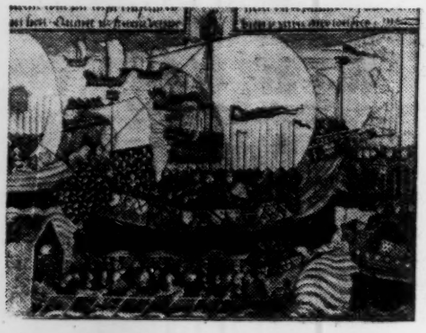

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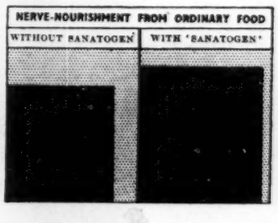

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dition of Llandaff Cathedral in 1728, when " Bishop Harris dumped inside the main structure a new church ' resembling a town hall—classic run to seed, with urn pinnacles,' or a ' pseudo-Italian temple.' " What a picture Cotman would have made of it! Nor have they made enough of the thrilling story of the beginnings of Welsh industry.

The production is a little mean for the price, but there are thirty illustrations that are a delight, including portraits of religious reformers and unfamiliar water-colours by Cornelius Varley, Michael Angelo Rooker, J. C. Ibbetson and others.

JOHN PIPER

STRATEGY, OR TACTICS?

Britain's Economic Strategy. By E. V. FRANCIS. *Cape.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

In this book, according to the publisher's announcement on the cover, " Mr. Francis shows the steps taken over twenty years to mobilise our industrial and financial resources against the day when they would be required." So, in a sense, it does; but it shows even more clearly the steps that were not taken, and the absence, behind the numerous measures adopted in dealing with this or that aspect of the British economic problem, of any coherent idea or plan of organisation. Indeed, the very title of Mr. Francis's book is a misnomer. There has been no British economic strategy, only tactics—no plan, only an adoption, often after long delay, of expedients forced upon dilatory or reluctant Governments by the sheer pressure of events. The publisher tells us that " no one who witnessed the course of events in the first week of September can fail to be struck by the efficiency with which Great Britain made the transition from a peace to a full-fledged war economy almost at a single turn of the administrative screw." Perhaps Mr. Francis is not to be saddled with the responsibility of what his publisher says about him; but it seems pertinent to enquire whether a full-fledged war economy is really consistent with the continuance of unemployment at an exceedingly high level, or with the evident lack of any plan thought out in advance for the regulation of price and wage-relationships, or for the financing of the war.

The first third of the book covers in outline the years between 1918 and 1930; and in this section Mr. Francis is doing no more than summarising the accounts that have been given by previous writers. This he does with tolerable competence, but without much inspiration, and indeed without much sign that he possesses a point of view of his own. This same want of a clearly defined attitude permeates the more important part of the book, in which Mr. Francis surveys the developments of the past ten years. He begins with an account of the recovery of sterling after the abrogation of the gold standard in 1931, and goes on to a quite good critical account of the Ottawa Conference, and of its repercussions on British economic relations with the rest of the world, and on world commercial policy in general. Thereafter, we come to a discussion of the various forms of government, or semi-government, intervention for the regulation or " rationalisation " of industry, with a parallel narrative of the course of British commercial negotiations and methods of financing foreign trade, as contrasted with the " technique of economic aggression " practised by Germany under the Nazi regime. In all this latter part of the book there is much useful material, above all in the explanation of Nazi methods of economic penetration in South America and South-Eastern Europe. Mr. Francis also narrates well enough the facts of Government action in relation to coal, iron and steel, cotton, ship-building, and other leading industries; though for some mysterious reason he excuses himself from discussing the measures of agricultural reorganisation and protection which have accompanied these forms of industrial intervention. The weakness of these sections of his book is that, while at times he seems to recognise the inherent shortcomings of a policy based mainly on the deliberate restriction of output, at other times he appears to accept unquestioningly the principle of leaving the industrialists to exercise large powers of " self-government " under the authority of the State. In short, Mr. Francis's book, except in the sections dealing with commercial diplomacy and finance, is much more useful as a storehouse of facts rescued from the daily press than as either an evaluation or a reasoned criticism of British economic policy in recent years.

G. D. H. COLE

A FLYING CARPET

Sometime—Never. By CLARE LEIGHTON. *Gollancz.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Miss Clare Leighton is best known as one of our very best wood-engravers, and in this volume of hers she again shows her skill in one or two full-page drawings and in fantastic head pieces and tail-pieces to every chapter. But it is the text that here attracts more attention than in her earlier books, such as *The Farmer's Year* or *Four Hedges*. It is a dream-like fantasy that she tells. We find her in a liner's cabin on her way to America in mid-Atlantic, while the boat goes plunging through heavy seas. Anyone who does not thoroughly enjoy rising and falling from one vast wave to another had best omit the Prologue, for the description as she climbs up one mountain of deep water and slides down into the valley below, so steeply that the propellers race and roar in the air at the stern, is very realistic. The ship wallows westward and it is the midnight hour when clocks must be put back—the hour dividing unborn to-morrow from dead yesterday; or rather last year from next, for it is New Year's Eve. Dancers roll and are dashed about on the saloon deck, but in her stateroom the author is overwhelmed by vague and obscure terrors. For she has fallen into a region beyond time and space, and there she remains throughout.

As in a crazy dream she is wafted from one remembered place to another. Space for her is destroyed, just as time is destroyed in that magic hour. With those lofty waves crashing against the ship's side only a few inches from her bed, she climbs first among mountains, passing without a moment's pause from Pyrenees to Greenland's icy peaks or Shenandoan valleys where negroes grow, then away to Algiers, the Balkans, Brittany, Canada, or the juicy vintage of Burgundy, where she stamps the purple grapes with the peasants, and drinks with them into still more rapid adventures. Wherever she flies she is quite at home, and to her, mankind, like the seven seas, are all one. But perhaps she dwells most fondly on the Chilterns or the Dorset of our own land. She has no fear among the lumberjacks in logging camps, for their simple humanity protects her from worse perils than the wolves outside, and next moment she is welcomed in Algiers or the Adriatic.

There is something of Walt Whitman in this sense of unity

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CHURCH ARMY

among mankind. Even the negroes of the Southern States are her kin and she describes the negro soul just as I have found it in the very midst of their native Africa, where the black people are haunted night and day by forms and spirits of evil. Never once have I heard of a benevolent spirit among them all, which proves what liberation of soul came upon the slaves in the South when they composed the "spirituals" in hope of eternal deliverance from civilised man.

It must have been upon our chalk hills that she found the vast white cutting of a giant, the emblem of fertility. That miracle of fertility and reproduction runs like a radiant thread throughout the whole book. She feels its pulsation in everything that has life—grasses and flowers, insects, birds, beasts and mankind. At first she is ashamed to look at a hen-blackbird brooding on her young, but on discovering herself with child, she can look the blackbird full in her shining eye. It is a delightful and inspiring book, full of an innocent but boisterous happiness, and ending, as it begins, with Job's great hymn of creation, when all the sons of God shouted for joy. HENRY W. NEVINSON

My Best Games of Chess, 1924-1937. By A. ALEKHINE. *Bell.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

A close study of the chess champion's games contained in this book and also of his commentary upon them increases one's respect for his genius. The word "genius" is often misapplied to chess champions and chess masters who have great talent, considerable subtlety, and occasional flashes of brilliancy. Alekhine has the permanent genius which continually illuminates his play and turns a game or intellectual exercise into an art. It deserted him for a brief period which covered his first championship match with Dr. Euwe, but to-day he seems to have completely recovered it. It consists in part of the "inexhaustible fertility of his imagination" to which a writer recently drew attention. The example to which that writer referred was highly characteristic, for Alekhine had coached one of the Argentine team at the recent Buenos Ayres tournament to play with devastating effect KKt-B3 as the fourth move in the French defence. It is this fertility of imagination which makes it impossible for his opponent ever to feel really safe, either in the most hackneyed opening, the most stodgy middle game, or an end game in which a draw appears to be inevitable. His commentary on his games is both instructive and entertaining. A very good example will be found in the famous eleventh game of his 1927 match with Capablanca. He considers that the praise given to the game has been excessive and, after studying his criticism and analysis, it is impossible not to agree with him.

Out of the South. By PAUL GREEN. *Allen and Unwin.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

This volume of fifteen plays is sub-titled "The life of a people in dramatic form," and it is the index of the author's success that he does, in at least half a dozen of them, achieve a genuine folk-quality. In America Mr. Paul Green is famous as the dramatist of the Deep South, that region of eleven states which the English reader who knows them only through Faulkner and Erskine Caldwell might be pardoned for thinking was one huge lunatic asylum. His material is the common stock of Southern writers: inbred, aristocratic planter-families, poor-white share-croppers, the negroes who are their traditional inferiors and their economic rivals, and behind all these that dream of a past, of happy slavery and elegant ease, perpetual mint-juleps and niggers who knew their places, which, if it ever existed, went with the wind when Lee surrendered. There resemblance to Faulkner and Caldwell ends; despite his themes of miscegenation and lynching, Mr. Green's is a gentler muse. Probably he comes as nearly as a white man can to an identification with the rural negro of the South, and his great achievement is his use of negro speech-rhythms in dialogue and his presentation of the negro, who is his pages is neither the Dogberry of Faulkner nor the whimsical child of Marc Connelly, so comforting to white superiority. Here the result is a poetic speech reminiscent of Synge. Much the finest play in an impressive collection is *In Abraham's Bosom*, which justly won him the Pulitzer Prize, the tragedy of a mulatto, who, having secured some education himself, dreams of the regeneration of his race through education, only to find his efforts continually obstructed by the Negroes themselves and finally ended by a lynching party.

Second Thoughts. By NICOLAS BENTLEY. *M. Joseph.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Bentley's drawings and verses reinforce one another. His victims include Messrs. Godfrey Winn, Duff Cooper, Beverley Nichols, Novello, Auden and Isherwood. We are shown Dr. Goebbels broadcasting, Miss Stack exercising, Ruskin looking at a Dali. Mr. Bentley, we fear, shows very doubtful taste—he is indeed so un-English as to poke fun at such national institutions as Mr. Priestley and the Selfridge clock, the cinema organ and Mr. Charles Morgan.

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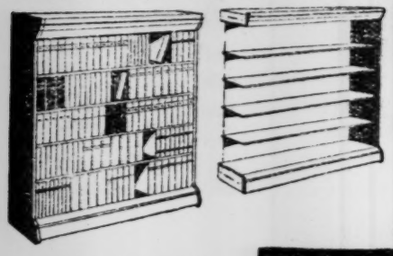

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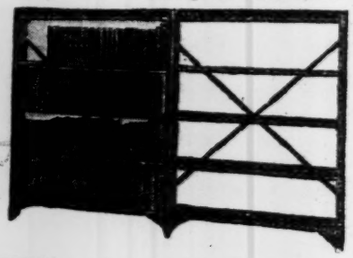

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ADDRESS

BOOKS TO COME

Rich and Cowan are publishing on December 8th as a Christmas travel book the account of a tour of investigation, *In the Steps of Lawrence of Arabia*. The author, Mr. Douglas Glen, went on a journey to Egypt, Arabia, Trans-Jordania and Syria visiting the scenes of all Lawrence's adventures, talking to Arab tribesmen and endeavouring to trace everyone still living who came into contact with him.

Federation and World Order, by Duncan Wilson, coming from Nelson about the middle of December is a brief account for the general reader of the main principles of Clarence Streit's *Union Now*. The author shows how Federalism has worked out in Switzerland, the United States and elsewhere and shows from these examples how it might be adopted on a world scale.

Nelson has just published a useful list of plays for black-outs suitable for acting or reading by amateurs. They have also compiled a guide for teachers who have gone into the country with their pupils and are struggling with the problem of amusement for out-of-school hours. This list includes readers, plays and books of puzzles and hobbies.

Chatto and Windus have also given special attention to the question of children's reading. As well as books specially written for children by authors who include Richard Hughes (*The Spider's Palace*) and E. V. Lucas (a reprint of *Anne's Terrible Good Nature*), they recommend a number of grown-up books which children should enjoy. These include *Select Tales of Tchehov* translated by Constance Garnett, *Love and Freindship* by Jane Austen and Margaret Irwin's historical novels.

Allen and Unwin hope to publish their *Brighter Black-Out Book* "a compendium of all the black-out entertainments of the nineteen forties," on December 8th. It includes an interesting list of the black-out reading of various minor celebrities.

Another contribution to the black-out—the Bodley Head publishes on December 14th *Silhouettes and Scissor-Cutting* by Hubert Leslie, said to be the first book ever written on the technique of this minor art.

Country Life announces a new Chiang Yee book—*The Silent Traveller in War Time*. The author, who last year showed us London in peace-time as it appeared to a Chinese artist, now provides a contrasting series of drawings of the contemporary London scene accompanied by a commentary in prose and verse. It is due about December 10th.

This firm has just issued numbers 1 and 2 of a new series, *World at Work Books*—"economic" books for children published at 1*s.* each. The first titles are *Making You Things*, by Diana Ross, and *Getting You Things*, by the same author.

Dents have in preparation a new series of books for children, the *All Clear Books*, priced at 2*s.* 6*d.* The series is divided into two

If Your Child were Evacuated –

to a place much too distant for you to visit, how thankful you would be to know that the N.S.P.C.C. was watching over the interests of evacuated children and their hostesses alike. When the child doesn't fit in with its new surroundings, and when the hostess doesn't understand the child—if heartbreaks are to be avoided something must be done. This "something" is being done by the N.S.P.C.C. out of its vast experience of child problems.

The National Society for the "Protection and Care of Children" is the additional war-time meaning of the famous initials—

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Please send a gift to Wm. J. Elliott, O.B.E., Director, The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Victory House, Leicester Square, London, W.C.2.

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Antique jewels survive the fashions of the seasons and the passions of wars. At

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Hardboards 2/6 (2/10 post free). Cloth 5/- (5/4 post free).

J. F. HORRABIN writes: "Gordon Walker's is a grand book—certainly one of the very best in the Plebs series. It's a whole library in a nutshell, so to speak."

The A.B.C. of Chairmanship By Sir Walter Citrine

Hardboards 2/6 (2/10 post free). Cloth 3/6 (3/10 post free).

OTHER "PLEBS" BOOKS ARE

"An Outline of Economic Geography" by J. F. Horrabin; "An Outline of Finance" by Arthur Woodburn, M.P.; "An Outline of Psychology" by H. Lyster Jameson; An Outline of Economics"—edited by W. T. Colyer; all 2/6 or 2/9 post free.

N.C.L.C. Publishing Society Ltd. (Publishers for the National Council of Labour Colleges) 15, South Hill Park Gardens, London, N.W.3.

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To Let and Wanted

PENN CLUB, 22 Bedford Place, London, W.C.1. Quiet, central situation. Temporary residential members received in agreeable, comfortable surroundings at moderate charges. Particulars from the Warden, Museum 4718.

STUDIO, furnished, unfurnished, 17s. 6d. Kitchen. use kitchen. Or as flat. Small room, 7s. 6d., reopened private house. Primrose 6534. Away Mondays to Wednesdays.

VERY charming furnished rooms in St. John's Wood. Central heating, hot water, service. 25s. p.w. inclusive. MR. A. V. PILLEY. Maida Vale 4519.

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LARGE room, modern block flats; central heating; use bathroom, kitchen. Haverstock Hill. One guinea. PRI. 4949.

PLEASANT furnished rooms, 16s. to 25s. C.h.w. 22 Belsize Avenue, N.W.3. Primrose 1043.

FURNISHED rooms from 15s. per week. Left household, no restrictions, at Sloane Square. 'Phone: FLA. 9970 day; SLO. 3842 evenings.

ACCOMMODATION—continued

BLOOMSBURY. BED-SITTING ROOM WANTED (unfurnished or furnished)—must be cheap. Box 6437.

COMFORTABLE accommodation, good food and consideration offered in safe and beautiful country. Beacon Cottage, Aston Rowant, Oxford. Tel.: Kingston Blount 219.

TIMBERSCOMBE, FERNHURST, HASLEMERE. Peaceful retreat. Ideal country. Particulars: MR. and MRS. GOLDRING. Tel.: Fernhurst 6.

TWO attractive divan rooms to let in Artist's house, 27s. 6d. and 22s. 6d. per week. Bath, electric light, gas fires. 'Phone: MUSeum 9348, evenings, or FLAxman 8609 during day.

BACHELOR (29) offers share flat, Candover Street, W.1. Partly furnished room, 16s. Box 6429.

sections—stories for those over and under 11. The children's book editor, Miss Carey, has arranged for the volumes to be printed in especially clear type. All of them will be illustrated with line drawings. The first eight titles include *Little Sidsel Longskirt*, by Hans Aanrud, translated from the Norwegian; a reprint of Gerald Bullett's *Remember Mrs. Munch* and an abridged version of *Bevis*. For older children there will be a new thriller by Noel Streatfield and a dog story, *Shag* by T. C. Hinkle. The first volumes will appear in the early spring.

The Oxford University Press announces for January a new book by Professor Gilbert Murray—*Aeschylus*, a companion volume to his *Aristophanes*, but one which will have a wider appeal, since it is less concerned with the interests of the specialists.

Constable will publish on December 11th *Irish Street Ballads*, collected and annotated by Colm O'Lochlainn.

MARIE SCOTT-JAMES

Week-end Competitions

No. 513

Set by G. St. Aubyn

The usual prizes are offered for a pair of letters (not more that 120 words each), the first from an evacuated child, the second from the child's host, both addressed to the child's parents.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, Dec. 15th.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

YOUR WILL

It is almost too evident that in a time of emergency the need to have made a will is underlined; also the need to have chosen an Executor who is capable

Increasingly people are turning to the corporate body rather than to the relative or friend. The Westminster Bank is here able to offer you a service.

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Trustee Offices also in BRISTOL, LIVERPOOL, MANCHESTER, *and* PICCADILLY

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 511

Set by Thomas Smallbones

The usual prizes are offered for the first 150-200 words of the commentary for an American travel 'short' on Oxford.

Report by Thomas Smallbones

There are two classical styles for the travel short, the reverent platitudinous and the pert facetious. The first is the more difficult, depending on the ability to sustain cliché, mixed metaphor, and bathos to the end. Matthew Arnold was the *locus classicus* for those who attempted it: "Oxford! Burg of dreaming spires, whispering from her towers the last enchantment of our Middle Age. Moonlight gardens! Crumbling venerable walls! Sleepy backwaters where even Rhodes Scholars canoodle with the fair. Oxford! Sanctuary of tradition, home of lost causes . . . ! (Little Billie). W. D. S. came nearest in this vein: "Oxford renowned throughout the world and through the ages for its devotion to scholarly labour. Amid the grey and moss-grown dreaming spires, from which we hear the bells tolling as centuries ago they tolled to famous sages, dwell England's greatest minds, living treasuries of the world's knowledge. At their feet, drinking deeply from the fount of learning, sits the flower of England's youth. . . . Down the majestic curve of the High Street treading with reverent feet the very stones which have felt the touch of Shakespeare's shoe . . . here on this famous street where the mediaeval gown flutters amid the unheeding and relentless sweep of modern traffic. . . ." Unfortunately it was not sustained.

To the facetious, muddled history was a favourite device: "Passing under gigantic Tom Tower, constructed by Christopher 'when we were very young' Wren, we arrive in the centre of Tom quad. Right here, in the depths of the picturesque fish-pool, probably lie the bones of England's Bluebeard king . . . Here is the tomb of Oxford's most revered poet, whose second wife, Mary W. Shelley, is known as the 'Bride of Frankenstein'" (O. T. Nicholls). The dons come in useful, too. "Watch out, Grandpop, those mortar-hats weren't meant for windy days" (T. C. B. Date). And, of course, the undergraduettes: "Hey, sister, what do they call you here? Co-eds? Ah, ha, the old frozen eye. Try again. Campus Canaries? Sorry, lady, we're strangers round here" (Charles Furbank).

The first prize goes to Alan R. Thomas for an excellent entry, the second to Allan M. Laing.

Wonder Productions Inc. Present:—

WORLD KEYHOLES, No. 13.

"LIMEY YALE"

Hello, you chaps! Yale fellow, well met! Pardon our Limey accent, youse guys, but it's on account of contact with Oxford, England's number one centre of education.

Oxford! Where life runs in cycles, and cycles run into life. Whew, careful mister! You'll bump the old maestro right on his seat of learning. Aw, heck—maybe he's a Cambridge guy! Thousands of push-cycles nearly make Oxford the home of lost corpses.

First noble pile we inspect is the oddly-named Brasenose. Yeh, we know, lady—you wanna see Robert Taylor's old school. Brasenose preserves a delightful old custom. The lawns are intended to be untrodden by mankind (dons ain't reckoned in that category) so any lawn ranger—Hi 'ya, Silver!—galloping over the greensward is fined—and made to pay through the Brasenose! Ouch!

Ancient Oxford! Where a Nuffield is as good as a feast. Where the students even have Oxford bags under their eyes.

Oxford University was founded in the reign of Henry III—Charles Laughton's great-great-grand-pappy. To-day its old school ties adorn the necks of many thousands throughout the world. Subject of much controversy is the Oxford Accent, bizarre mode of speech adopted by its sons. From Oxford also comes a streamlined religion; the Oxford Group.

Picturesque, strange, bewildering Oxford—producing a flattened vowel, a homespun faith, and a pair of fancy pants!

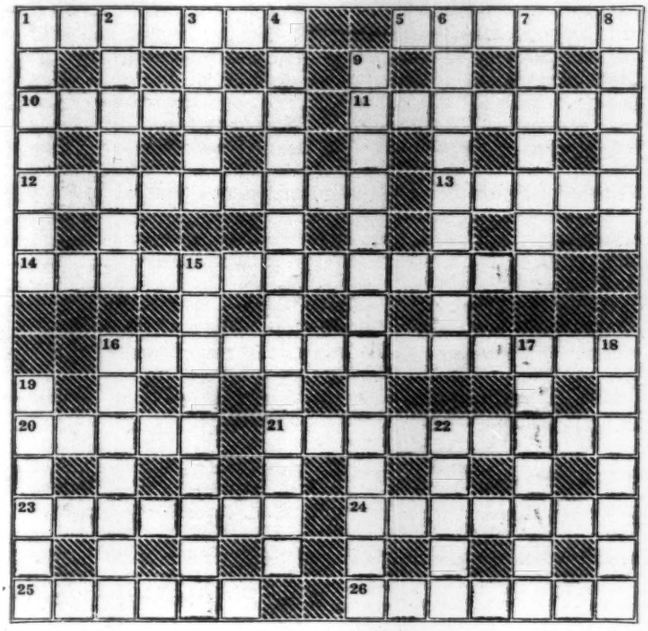
ALAN R. THOMAS

Well, folks, this is Oxford, England. I guess you've all heard of it already. Right here is where Great Britain's gilded youth ac-quire their gilt—and mebbe lose their innocence. It is also the home of that pecooliar and wonderful ac-cent you all hear on the transatlantic radio. Shall I slob a bibful? O.K. folks, not if you'd rather I wouldn't. . . . What you're looking at now isn't Oxford College: it's only the approach. And is it lousy? I'll say it is. But that's England all over. In the old country dirt surrounds beauty. It's old, too, remember that—older'n Harvard and Yale—some. This Oxford, folks, is famous for two things. Yeah, you got it—sausages and universities. What you're seeing now is the University, not the sausages. . . . This quaint li'l street is called The Corn. Don't ask me why: I wouldn't know; but most English folk have corns, on account, I guess, that they don't wear American Oxfords. . . . Here's The Broad, folks, where two martyr guys named Latimer and Ridley were well and truly barbecued. It was way back, folks: no need to take your wipes out. . . . And now—O boy, O boy!—get an eyeful of those dreaming spires. . . .

ALLAN M. LAING

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 509

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is
Sydney Cubitt, 19 Effingham Road, Surbiton.

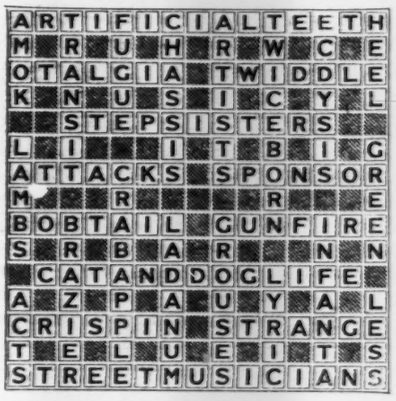
ACROSS

1. Treason in the accusative as it were. (7)
5. Only a section of the company got in it with their kit. (6)
10 (rev.). A sheet about the railwaymen's union. (7)
11. Lean-to. (7)
12 (rev.). Evidently not taking an entrance test. (9)
13. A matter for the miller. (5)
14. A fishy visitor? (13)
16. "Josephine" coat. (13)
20. This bird describes a sitter. (5)
21. Possibly not stymie. (9)
23. "He that endures to the end" possesses it. (7)
24. O, so thin, really. (7)
25. D went off the deepend. (6)
26 (rev.). Result of a little diplomatic oiling, no doubt. (7)

DOWN

1. The recipient of such notes finds a certain sameness about them. (7)
2. A hundred per cent. tumour. (7)
3. This place puts an end to Ann. (5)
4. Subject soon of much wishful thinking. (14)
6. Person guilty of rank abandonment. (9)
7. Authoritative paper marks. (7)
8. Medical entertainments. (6)
9. It's the sun's turn, as it were, just before Christmas. (14)
15. It should presumably make a sweet pipe for the smoker. (9)
16. Of course they rag me at this town. (7)
17. How Swedes, for instance, harvest. (7)
18. Extreme condition of a pussy-foot? (7)
19. Hunted the Young Pretender. (6)
22. He had a good shot, the dramatists think, at the wild duck. (5)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD



PERSONAL

BOARDING school required for girl (13), rather backward. Midlands preferred, not exceeding £105 yearly. Doctor invites replies. Box 6443.

THREE artists seek collaborator with small capital, to establish an artist's café club in their premises in Soho. Box 6409.

LEFT Author seeks help new book, typing, research. Interesting opportunity inexperienced person. Box 6418.

VIENNESE lady pianist (degree), experienced accompanist, seeks job. Box 6446.

BOOK PUBLISHING. Advertiser with long experience desires to meet with someone who will join him in acquiring control of small publishing house with attractive possibilities. Moderate capital required to develop trading already secured. Salaried position offered to right man. Write Box 6420.

SOMEWHERE in England. Young refugee, here since 1936, joining up shortly, seeks short-term employment or hospitality. Languages, teaching, driving, secretarial work. Box 6425.

DRAMATIC and Musical Talent Wanted for Amateur Cabaret. Write 1A Primrose Gardens, Hampstead.

CALLING FOREIGNERS! English Accent, Intonation and Conversation taught. GLADYS NYREN, 162 Haverstock Hill, N.W.3.

JUST time for a natural portrait of yourself as Christmas present. Why go to a studio when Oscar Marcus, artist photographer, will do better in your own home? 'Phone Flaxman 8672.

FOR ANY MAN . . . Christmas Number of THE GEOGRAPHICAL MAGAZINE, now on sale (1s. 6d.). Better still, give him an annual sub. 15s. post free from Publishers, 40 N William IV St., London, W.C.2

JOIN A DRAMATIC SOCIETY. 4s. only, Whole Season! GLADYS NYREN, L.R.A.M. (Elocution), 162 Haverstock Hill, N.W.3.

SHORTHAND-TYPING. One hour's voluntary help invited. St. Francis Hospital, Red Lion Square, W.C.1.

ENGLISH CLASSES FOR REFUGEES. Small circle, individual tuition, moderate charges. Box 6435 or 'phone EUSton 2368.

A VACCINE by the Mouth. Secure immunity from COLDS and INFLUENZA for 4 to 6 months by taking "BUCCALINE" Brand Tablets, 5s., post free (special Children's Pack, 3s. 6d.), from the Agents, HAYMAN & FREEMAN, Chemists, 93 Piccadilly, W.1. Mayfair 4231.

Anthony Panting

Many people tell me that they read my small Personal advertisements every week, but, in case you haven't, I am a photographer, and this year I am continuing with an enlarged series of photographic Christmas cards, illustrations of which you can obtain from me on request. You will be able to choose your cards without battling in a shop and your order will be attended to by return of post. The cards, which cost 3d. each or 2/3 for 1939's set of 10 (with envelopes), are simple and devoid of fussy sentimentality, Christmas trees or stage-coaches . . . but then you can see what they are like by writing a P.C. to

Anthony Panting
5, Paddington Street, W.1

PERSONAL—continued

PRICES for my portraits remain from £2 2s., including six copies, but my Christmas cards are cheaper this year at 3d. each, or 2s. 3d. the enlarged set of ten, with envelopes. A card illustrating them will be sent on request to 5 Paddington Street, W.1. ANTHONY PANTING.

FIGHT BOREDOM by LEARNING GERMAN with young Austrian lady. LESSONS IN LONDON or Correspondence Course. Box 6434.

REGISTER your National Registration Number as your MONOMARK. Invaluable in wartime. 5s. yearly. Write Monomark BM/MONO12, W.C.1.

HOW TO STOP SMOKING. Quick, cheap, lasting, harmless, as grateful 1,000's testify. Either sex. Write: CARLTON CHEMICALS, 251 Birmingham.

DETECTIVES. Divorce, private enquiries, etc. Moderate. Consultation free. UNIVERSAL DETECTIVES (Estabd. 1929), 12 Henrietta Street, W.C.2. TEM. 8594.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

ABBATT TOYS AND CHILDREN'S BOOKS. Christmas Lists graded according to age, post free to readers of the *New Statesman*. 94 Wimpole Street, W.1.

PICTURE-LOVERS will enjoy receiving a XMAS-CARD REPRODUCTION of a favourite painting. Modern Painters, 6d. Impressionist, 3d. and 6d. Also Woodcuts, charming though not so distinguished, 1d. and 2d. Selection on receipt of postal order to include 2d. postage. For GIFTS we have a large selection of small prints, beautifully framed, 7s. 6d. post free. ABBATT, 94 Wimpole Street, W.1.

MISCELLANEOUS

HAVE your favourite suit copied exactly in a "John Peel" Cumberland Tweed, £5 5s. 0d. Fit guaranteed or money refunded. Patterns and particulars post free. REDMAYNE, LTD., 10 Wigton, Cumberland.

HAVE YOU COCKROACHES? Then buy "BLATTIS" UNION COCKROACH PASTE, universally and successfully used in all parts of the globe, extermination guaranteed; from Chemists, Boots' Branches, or Sole Makers: HOWARD'S, 473 Crookesmoor, Sheffield. Tins 1s. 6d., 2s. 6d., 4s. 6d.

CLEARANCE SALE. Modern furniture and easy chairs 25 per cent. below pre-war prices. COX & PINNEY. FLA. 9970. Open till 7 p.m. 312 King's Road, S.W.3. Our original Xmas Cards are worth seeing. Open Saturday till 8 o'clock.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Rates, and all information on page 873

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By CYNICUS

MR. DURBIN, INFLATION AND THE GILT-EDGED MARKET—FRENCH CREDIT—SHIPPING AND RUBBER—FINNISH BONDS

COMES another economist to show us "How to pay for the war." Mr. Evan Durbin would have inflation rather than Mr. J. M. Keynes' scheme of compulsory savings, provided the inflation was "moderate, strictly limited and planned." His idea of a moderate inflation is Government borrowing from the banks at a rate which would approximately double the money income of the nation and halve the purchasing power of the currency over a period of five years. This would horrify orthodox financiers but many believe that it is the only way in which the consumption of the enriched working classes can be restricted. The pity of it is that it would not give any permanent benefit to the workers: it would only enrich profits and swell taxation receipts. All of us now agree that some inflation is inevitable with Sir John Simon's scheme of voluntary savings. It may take longer to develop than we expected because the deflationist budget on the one hand and unintelligent Government controls on the other have retarded the rise in the national output and saddled us with 1,400,000 unemployed even after three months of war. But the inflation will not wait upon full employment—for technical reasons which need not here be explained—and the only questions which confront the investor are whether the inflation can be controlled and whether it need cause a rise in interest rates, i.e., a fall in the gilt-edged market. I am prepared to answer both questions somewhat optimistically in the affirmative if only because Government control of the economic life is more complete in wartime and it should be much easier to control inflation now than in peace-time. Normally an inflationary rise in prices causes a huge increase in distributable profits and a frantic demand for capital to be employed in the booming industries. To-day distributable profits are limited by Government control and taxation and no capital issues can be made without Treasury consent. In other words there is nothing to force up the rate of interest except psychology. There is, therefore, no reason why the gilt-edged market should fall when inflation comes provided it is controlled and gives no occasion for a market psychology of fear. This seems to be the view held by the more intelligent in the City. It may explain why the long-dated Government stocks have actually been rising in anticipation of the coming City loan.

* * *

Following on the pooling of economic resources between the French and British Empires, which is a tremendous thing if it means what it says, Sir John Simon has been coming to an agreement this week with M. Paul Reynaud for closer financial co-operation. We are told somewhat vaguely that the agreement covers *inter alia* "credits on a mutual basis between the two countries." Does this mean that we back French Government credit during the war and that the French back ours? If so, investors might consider buying some of the French railway bonds guaranteed by the French Government which are quoted in the London market. For example, Nord 6 per cent. 1950 bonds, callable at 103 on three months' notice, are selling at 96 to yield £6 5*s.* per cent. "flat." I have met some investors who even prefer French Government credit to British during a war on the grounds that we, a nation of big spenders and big food importers, are more likely to break into an inflation spiral than an agricultural country of big savers like the French. I have also met others who prefer M. Paul Reynaud to Sir John Simon as economic dictator.

PURELY PERSONAL

EXPECTATIONS UNDER WILLS. Why wait years to inherit Uncle Edgar's cigars when you can enjoy the superb flavour of a King Six to-day for 6½*d.* Call at your tobacconists.

It has been a dull week on the Stock Exchange, but shipping shares were conspicuously strong on the Government's virtual admission of the owner's claim for a revision of freight rates. Shipping shares should have been the best of war "equities" for the investor, but after a sharp rise of 50 per cent. in September they have suffered a gradual two months' reaction. I have already explained how Government controls and taxation have robbed such conventional war "hedges" as steel, oil, copper and gold shares of their investment appeal. It is a similar story with shipping. The Government fixed rates of freight allowed to British ships loading cargoes for this country at levels which were below the best open market rates for 1937. The owners claimed that higher costs and war insurance had made these rates unprofitable and they pointed to the fact that neutral shipping rates were much higher. The increases which the Government has now granted will not satisfy everyone. From the River Plate grain freights have been raised from 32*s.* 6*d.* to 43*s.* 6*d.* a ton, which exceeds the 1937 high levels by 5*s.* 6*d.* but compares with 62*s.* 6*d.* paid for neutral vessels. From Western Australia the grain increase is from 45*s.* to 55*s.* per ton against 80*s.* per ton for neutral vessels. It would be far better if the Government were to take over the shipping industry altogether and pay a compensation dividend to the equity holders of the shipping lines for the duration of the war. No, I cannot recommend shipping shares as an inflation hedge. Indeed, is there any real inflation hedge to be found anywhere in this war?

* * *

So far it has been a very disappointing war for the speculative investor. The *Investors Chronicle* security index discloses the following falls in share prices at the end of November as compared with the end of July—12.6 per cent. in aviation, 9.7 per cent. in breweries, 5.6 per cent. in chemicals, 6.9 per cent. in food and tobacco, 18.2 per cent. in gas and electrical supply, 10.2 per cent. in iron and steel, 22.9 per cent. in motors, 26.3 per cent. in newspapers, 18.5 per cent. in retail stores, 8.7 per cent. in copper, 7.2 per cent. in oil and 9.2 per cent. in gold shares. The only groups, apart from shipping, which have had substantial rises in this period are rubber (30 per cent.) and tin (41 per cent.). I have been recommending tin shares for some time and in my opinion this market is not yet too high. As for rubber shares, the market has reason to be more cautious than in the case of tin. Although the price of rubber has risen since July by 36 per cent.—from 8 $\frac{5}{16}$*d.* per lb. to 11 $\frac{5}{16}$*d.* the estate costs of production are likely to rise more substantially and output quotas have not been so quickly increased. As compared with 60 per cent. in July the rubber quota is now 75 per cent. and will be 80 per cent. in the first quarter of 1940 (based on output assessments which are about 14 per cent. higher than last year). Further, rubber is much more dependent upon the motor industry. Of course, both rubber and tin base their prosperity upon the United States, which accounts for between 45 per cent. and 50 per cent. of their world demand and the speculative investor must bear in mind that American buying of both commodities is for the moment speculative. The American consumer is scared of being caught short of raw material supplies during a long war and is stocking-up as fast as he can. Herein lies the risk of investment in both rubber and tin at present prices, but tin, with a controlled price which is on the low side, is obviously in a more stable position than rubber. Some optimists are arguing that rubber companies can look forward to dividends in 1940 on the level of 1937 dividends, when rubber averaged 9½d. and the quota 84 per cent. Here are some representative dividend yields on that basis:—

	Present Price	1937 Div.	1938 Div.	Gross Yield % on 1937 Divs.
Allied Sumatra £1 ..	16/3	6%	4%	£7 7 9
United Sua Betong £1 ..	54/6	17½%	12%	6 9 3
Kepong (Malay) 2/- ..	3/3	13½%	4½%	8 6 3
London Asiatic 2/- ..	3/9	12½%	10%	6 13 3

It would be more conservative to estimate the dividends in 1940 middle-way between 1937 and 1938. This means that rubber shares are not particularly cheap, but if I were a holder I would not sell.

* * *

The martyrdom of Finland is seen in the painful fall of Finnish Government bonds on the Stock Exchange. The credit of the only European country which paid its war debts had been ranked high. For example, Finland Fives and Mortgage Bank Fives used to stand at 105 but to-day they are quoted nominally at 10 to 30. Perhaps Mr. Roosevelt will come to the rescue of the bond-holders: there are many resident in the United States.

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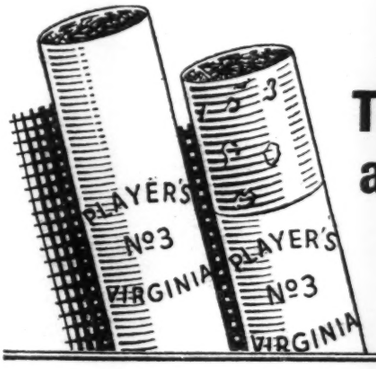

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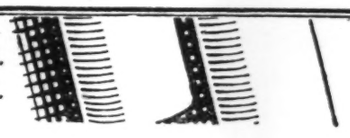

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SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn. Sunday, December 10th, at 11 a.m., PROFESSOR SUSAN L. STEBBING, M.A., D.Lit.: "THE NEED AND DIFFICULTY OF AN IDEAL." Admission free. Visitors welcome.

THE ETHICAL CHURCH, Queensway, Bayswater, W.2. Morning service only. Sunday, December 10th, at 11, H. J. BLACKHAM: "MR. T. S. ELLIOT'S 'IDEA OF A CHRISTIAN SOCITY'."

SOVIET PROGRESS. Four Saturday afternoon lectures, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1. Jan. 13th, Sir Charles Trevelyan on "Soviet Democracy"; Jan. 20th, Mr. D. N. Pritt on "The U.S.S.R. and Colonies"; Jan. 27th, Dean of Canterbury on "Moral Aspects of the U.S.S.R."; Feb. 3rd, Mr. Pat Sloan on "Politics of the U.S.S.R." Commence 3 p.m. Course tickets, 3s., from RUSSIA TO-DAY SOCIETY, 8 Red Lion Square, W.C.1.

JOINT Philosophy Group of F.P.S.I. and S.P.E.S. Conway Hall, Library, Wednesday, December 13th, 8 p.m. DR. PRYNS HOPKINS: "A CRITIQUE OF FREUD'S 'MOSES AND MONOTHEISM.'"

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